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www.kentnews.co.uk October 18, 2015

North & West edition No 682

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Just what lesson does grammar debate teach?

THERE is a dilemma for every parent in Kent for whom grammar schools represent all that is bad about an educational system which judges you on a single test at the age of 10 or 11.

In this county, a selective system has operated now for as long as anyone cares to remember. Generations have grown up and passed through it, surpassing and failing their potential in equal measure. For Kent, we now know little different.

But unless you are so principled you should be receiving a special medal, it is all too easy to park your inclusive philosophy to replace it with a desire to see your child in the school in which, statistically, they are most likely to emerge with the best education. That is, more often than not, in a grammar school.

And therein lies the problem at the very heart of the selective debate.

That, and of



Editor **Chris Britcher**

course, the absurd concept of defining a child's entire secondary education by a test when they are just 10 or 11.

Yet by allowing ourselves this understandable desire to give our children what we perceive as the best, we then put an enormous strain on every non-selective.

With the 11-plus-passing top 20 per cent creamed off, they then have to compete in league tables with the rest of the country with one hand effectively tied behind their backs;

and then get criticised if they fail to meet the same standards.

The truth is that we are both blessed and cursed by our selective system. Do they create social mobility? Do they lean towards prep school students? It could, in itself, become a compelling add-on to the national curriculum; the only

problem being there may be no right or wrong answer.

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Motorway mayhem after string of serious crashes

By Jamie Weir

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COASTBOUND traffic on a 13-mile stretch of the M20 was brought to a standstill twice this week after two horrific smashes which left one man dead and another five in hospital.

And it left the vital stretch of road between junction 8 for Bearsted at Maidstone and junction 9 for Ashford closed for a total of nearly 20 hours.

The knock-on effect was huge queues on the A20 – a situation further exacerbated by the road having temporary traffic lights due to gas works.

The first crash took place just before the morning rush-hour on Wednesday and left one man dead.

It is believed – although is still to be officially confirmed – that the victim was a migrant trying to cross the carriageway on foot.

As police conducted a major investigation into the tragedy, the road was closed for seven hours.

A police spokesman said the man was hit near to the slip road of junction eight. It was so serious it also left the Londonbound



STANDSTILL: Coastbound traffic was gridlocked in the wake of the two serious smashes

carriageway closed for 90 minutes as well.

Just a day later (Thursday), and morning rush hour motorists faced yet more problems after a pile-up forced the same stretch of road to be shut again.

The crash happened at around 4.40am involving five cars - an Audi TT, two articulated lorries, a Vauhall Vivaro and a Fiat Ducato.

Three people were rushed to a London hospital. The two men and

one woman were all described on Friday as being in a critical condition. The other two men involved in the accident were both taken to a local hospital after suffering serious injuries.

Sergeant Glyn Walker said: "We would appeal to anyone who has not yet spoken to officers to get in touch."

"In particular, we know many people now have cameras in their cars so if you happened to drive

past and film the collision please get in touch."

Traffic which was diverted onto the A20 to dodge the two incidents was left queuing for up to 90 minutes for the 15 mile journey to Ashford.

A third, more minor accident took place on the same stretch on Friday, when a woman was injured in the single vehicle crash which took place just before 8am and left one lane closed to drivers.

Innovative Kent Police project to be rolled out across EU in abuse fight

KENT Police has signed up to a new child protection initiative in the Netherlands after attending a summit attended by 24 police forces from across the European Union this week.

Child protection specialists from across Europe met at Europol in The Hague for the launch of three tools that were developed under the Fighting International Internet Paedophilia project (FIIP), which is a project funded with the financial support of the European Commission.

One of those tools is KIRAT; the Kent Internet Risk Assessment Tool. In 2012 an EU collaborative project led by Kent Police received funding of over one million euros to develop the tool for use in Europe. It was originally developed by Kent Police and the University of Liverpool for use in the UK.

KIRAT is used to risk assess people who view indecent images of children on the internet. This helps police assess the level of risk posed by a suspect and the likelihood of that

person becoming a contact offender.

Dr Peter Reijnders, programme manager of the National Police of The Netherlands, said: "We have worked closely together with Kent Police and other involved partners. In 2013 we started a pilot in our Rotterdam team."

"We have learned a lot these past two years. KIRAT has proven to be a very valuable tool. This summit gives us and everyone attending the opportunity to share and combine our knowledge in order to further intensify the combat of child sexual abuse images on an international level."

The KIRAT risk assessment tool has been rolled out across the Netherlands. Some 11 teams fighting child sexual abuse are using it.

Kent Police, the National Crime Agency (NCA) and University of Liverpool have since received further funding, from the prime minister's innovation fund, to help roll the tools out in four countries outside of the EU.

After the results, now comes the debate over Kent Test

AS PARENTS discovered on Wednesday how their children had performed in the Kent Test, a major conference looking at the exam and the admissions procedure for grammar schools takes place this week.

The conference at County Hall in Maidstone is on Wednesday and runs from 5-7.30pm. Open to everyone from parents, teachers,

school governors and tutors, it will look at the new Kent Test, alternatives, appeals, and the ever controversial issue of coaching.

A panel of experts will include advisor Peter Read and Kent head teachers Matthew Bartlett and Emma Hickling. The event is supported by Kent on Sunday. Tickets in advance cost £10. See www.nationaltutoring-conference.org.uk.

Warning over clowns and vans approaching children

PARENTS and children are being urged to stay vigilant after a number of suspicious incidents in and around Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells in recent weeks.

There have been reports of people in vans approaching children and of people wearing clown or Halloween masks to deliberately scare young people.

Tunbridge Wells Chief Inspector

Dave Pate said: "We are still working to establish whether any offences have been committed. However, I want to assure parents that we take the safety of all children very seriously and have extra officers on patrol around schools. I would also ask parents to make sure they remind children how to keep safe."

"If you spot anything suspicious report it to us."



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TV star Biggins to unveil attraction at old zoo

THE legendary Christopher Biggins will be opening a new tourist attraction in Maidstone next week.

The star of everything from the original Rocky Horror Picture Show movie to I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out of Here, will be cutting the ribbon at the new visitor centre and cafe at Cobtree Manor Park in Aylesford.

The Sir Garrard Tyrwhitt-Drake Visitor Centre and

Café bears the name of the former owner of the Cobtree Estate who ran the Maidstone Zoo at Cobtree Manor Park from 1934 to 1959.

The visitor centre and the many other attractions at the 54-acre park are zoo inspired and include play equipment and a sculpture trail throughout the grounds. The opening is at 2pm on October 19.



SURPRISE: Polar bear had company

Migrant shock as polar bear lorry boarded

A POLAR bear who had an unexpected encounter with shocked migrants who climbed aboard his lorry in Calais appears unfazed by his experience, his new owners have said.

The bear, called Nissan, was in the back of a truck outside the French town en route to Dover when a group of people managed to open the back doors and three of them got into the compartment containing his cage.

Nissan was on the final stages of his own journey from eastern Europe in search of a better life in the UK - at the Yorkshire Wildlife Park in Doncaster.

He set off from Moscow Zoo earlier in the week by plane. But the second leg of his journey to South Yorkshire was by road from Frankfurt, Germany.

A Yorkshire Wildlife Park spokesman confirmed that migrants got aboard Nissan's lorry close to the camp known as The Jungle on Tuesday morning. The doors were shut and three men were inside the truck for about 10 minutes before French police arrived.

Witness Simon Bridger, of West Malling, said: "It only took 17 seconds before they prised open the truck's back doors. They must have had the surprise of their lives."

A wildlife park spokesman said: "He's absolutely fine. He's settling in well."

CPRE steps up a gear as it fights to block racetrack's bid for major expansion

By Jamie Weir

pa en

A HIGH octane battle is shaping up on the grid over the future of one of the county's top motorsport circuits.

Lydden Hill, in Wootton, between Canterbury and Dover, has developed a reputation for hosting rounds of the World Rallycross championship which regularly pulls in thousands.

Owner and race star Pat Doran wants to invest heavily in the circuit and has applied for planning permission which would see its facilities upgraded, a new grandstand, car parking and other buildings.

He claims failure to get permission could force the site to close - and for it then to be turned into a giant lorry park to help ease problems caused by Operation Stack.

Now countryside campaign group CPRE Kent - the county's branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England - has said that the development will destroy tranquillity in the im-



PLANS: Lydden Hill

portant Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) - and has vowed to fight the plans.

CPRE Kent's Jillian Barr said: "It is not sustainable development because of its sensitive and isolated ru-

ral location and noise and traffic nuisance would be detrimental to the tranquillity of the countryside and amenities enjoyed by the local community."

Despite that Lydden Hill race track has robustly defended its plans, saying that if it cannot expand, the future of the circuit could be in question.

A spokesman for the track said: "We don't want Lydden's future to swing in the balance or allow it to become another lorry park."

"We are very keen to gain as much support as possible and doubt we can carry on in the same way without this planning consent. We have a positive and exciting future ahead and we are hoping that our friends and the local community will get behind us and support our plans going forward by sending in votes, letters and positive feedback to Dover council to ensure a positive outcome."

Lydden Hill appeared on the final episode of Top Gear, prior to Jeremy Clarkson's fracas, and recently hosted a visit by Formula One stars Jenson Button and David Coulthard.

Pigeon feeding to be banned with order

LEGAL powers to crack down on antisocial behaviour in Gravesend town centre have been put forward by police and local council chiefs.

The proposed order could impose conditions on the likes of street drinking, the use of legal highs, buskers, cycling and even feeding of pigeons.

Gravesend Borough Council is now consulting the public over what is known as a 'public space protection order'. The consultation runs from October 19 to November 15.

Samir Jassal, cabinet member for business development, said: "Some problems in Gravesend have proved to be persistent and are affecting the quality of life of local people and having a negative impact on local businesses. It is hoped that the new, stronger, measure can cover a much far-reaching range of issues than the previous, individual initiatives. Coupled with better enforcement powers, we think this may provide the answers to long term problems."

Lecturer studies film and TV in Chilham

A LECTURER at the University of Kent is trying to trace those who have lived and worked in and around the picturesque village of Chilham, near Canterbury, as part of a study into TV and films shot there.

Film lecturer Dr Lavinia Brydon, of the university's school of arts, is seeking out those with specific experiences of film and TV productions in Chilham, perhaps through seeing their home used as a location.

She is inviting anyone with a memory or anecdote of filming to drop in to Chilham Village Hall next Sunday, October 25, to share their best and worst memories. The event, entitled Chilham on Screen, runs from noon to 6pm and is free and open to all who would like to share their experiences.

Dr Brydon is particularly keen to record people's anecdotes of having their home or business turned into a film set, but she'd also love see photographs, autographs, newspaper clippings and other memorabilia. It will form part of a research project seeking to understand the impact of location filming in the village.

Paperwork slashed as hospices upgrade

COMMUNITY nurses are set to save hundreds of hours a year following the rollout of secure mobile devices at Pilgrims Hospices in east Kent.

Now nurses on the ground covering the region can access highly secure patient records and test results in real time at the touch of a button, while on call.

It's estimated that community nurses will save around 144 hours a year by going paperless.

The devices - which include iPads and iPhones - were paid for through charitable donations including Kent Cancer Care and Kent Community and were securely configured and synchronised to hospice systems by NHS technology organisation, Kent and Medway Health Informatics Service (KMHS).

Debbie Boots, advanced nurse practitioner working in the community, has used the system and was impressed.

She said: "I've worked for the hospice for the last 15 years and there is a lot of paperwork behind every patient visit so to be able to work in real-time and update patient records is great."

Let us pray for a good interest rate as diocese unveils loans

By Chris Britcher

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VICARS are to start offering financial planning support to couples planning to tie the knot.

It comes after the Diocese of Rochester partnered a number of credit unions in order to offer low interest loans to those struggling to save the money needed for a wedding.

The diocese's Rev Canon Jean Kerr said: "Simply put, credit unions are community savings and loans providers. The idea is that members mutually benefit as there's no profit for third-party shareholders.

"For some, they can be a welcome alternative to payday loans or doorstep lending but they are open to all and the more people that join in, the more successful they will be.

"Vicars in the Diocese of Rochester will help couples to join their local credit union if that is something that may help them with their saving for the big day."

The diocese, which extends from Bromley and Bexley through to Dartford, Gravesend, Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Sevenoaks, has partnered with Kent Savers, Medway Credit Union and Greenwich and Bexley Credit Union to offer a free voucher to couples planning their weddings who would like to start saving with a credit union.



ADVICE: Rochester of Cathedral is at the heart of the diocese

A credit union is a member-owned financial cooperative, democratically controlled by its members, and operated for the purpose of promoting thrift, providing credit at competitive rates, and providing other financial services to its members.

If borrowing for the wedding is necessary, a low cost credit union loan will be more affordable than other, higher interest loans, it says.

The Rt Rev James Langstaff, Bishop of Rochester, said: "It is always a privilege to be a part of the celebration of marriage and we

want to help and support couples as they plan. I'm particularly pleased to be able to raise awareness of credit unions, because they are important in helping to build a community and counter financial exclusion."

Earlier this year, the Archbishop of Canterbury joined church leaders to launch the Churches Mutual Credit Union (CMCU).

It came after he hit out at the sky-high interest rates offered by a number of payday loan companies.

City set for major 10 screen cinema plans

A MULTIPLEX cinema is set to form the heart of a major leisure complex proposed for the Kingsmead area of Canterbury.

It follows the signing this week of an agreement between the city council and property developer Bouygues Development.

A public exhibition into the plans starts October 23 and includes plans for student flats, a 10-screen cinema and 65 residential units.

Fine of £8,000 for those dropping litter

MEDWAY magistrates issued fines and costs totalling more than £8,000 for 19 people who failed to pay their penalty notices for dropping litter in Gravesend.

Cases were brought by Gravesham Borough Council against 21 people who did not pay the £75 fixed penalty fines in time.

Motorcyclist is killed

A MOTORCYCLIST has been killed after a crash on Sheppey on Thursday morning.

They were pronounced dead at the scene after emergency crews were called just after 10am to a smash involving a silver Ford Fiesta and a black Suzuki motorcycle.

Police are appealing for witnesses to the crash to get in touch.

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Booth-free toll is delivering big time savings, figures say

HIGHWAYS England says motorists using the Dartford Crossing during peak times are shaving 90 minutes off their journeys every week since the booths were scrapped.

According to figures released this week, journeys over the crossing are up to 56 per cent faster with drivers at peak times saving up to 14 minutes southbound and seven minutes northbound.

Spread across the day, the average time savings are seven and a half minutes southbound and three and a half minutes northbound.

The improvements have been achieved despite traffic volumes at the crossing growing by around four per cent, with up to 157,000 crossings being made every day in July, around 20,000 over the crossing's design capacity.



Dart Charge project director Nigel Gray said: "These really encouraging figures show what a difference it is making. Drivers commuting from Essex in to Kent are saving around 20 minutes a

day, and others commuting from Kent to Essex are saving more than 15 minutes a day. We still have more work to do, but I hope this will reassure people Dart Charge is working."

Decision on moving Noye to open prison due soon

NOTORIOUS M25 road rage killer Kenneth Noye is due to find out if his appeal to get out of a high security prison and into an open jail has been granted.

Noye is currently serving a life term with a minimum 16-years after the 1996 stabbing of Stephen Cameron.

Known as the M25 road rage murder, Noye stabbed the 21-year-old in front of his girlfriend on the slip road of the motorway at Swanley.

He then fled abroad to Spain, sparking a huge man-hunt, before finally being caught and facing trial in 2000.

After finally winning a parole board hearing last month, it sat to hear the 68-year-old's case for clemency. It emerged the board felt he

was not suitable for release - but could be transferred from Wayland prison in Norfolk to an open jail.

Such a move is normally seen as a step towards a release with a more relaxed regime designed to allow long time prisoners to prepare for a release back into the community.

But a final decision rests with the Ministry of Justice, which is due to make its decision by Monday - 28 days after the parole board recommendation was made.

Few people back his move for freedom. Stephen Cameron's mother Toni said: "We just feel that it's not fair that he should come out and have parole. He's a villain and he always has been. His whole life is criminality."

Spooky talk at the pub

A SPECIAL talk about the ghosts of north west Kent for Halloween takes place on Friday in Northfleet.

Speaker Christoph Bull will deliver the talk with dramatic readings at the Coach & Horses pub. It starts at 7.30pm and costs £10 for a ticket which includes a meal.

High Street crackdown

A POLICE operation to catch offending motorists in Maidstone High Street has netted 21 drivers caught flouting the rules.

The work aimed to clamp down on motorists using the top end of the road where there are tight restrictions in place allowing only buses, taxis, bikes and emergency vehicles.

MP feeling flush on loos

SOUTH Thanet MP Craig Mackinlay is launching a national campaign to exempt local authority run public loos from business rates.

He says the non-domestic rates bill can be a significant total of the entire local precept for local and town councils and should be changed.

Removal centre to shut

THE Dover Immigration Removal Centre is to close, the Home Office has confirmed.

The facility on the Western Heights can hold just over 300 failed asylum seekers awaiting removal.

They will be re-housed in more modern facilities elsewhere.

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The listed attraction is brought back to life

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Protests sparked by expansion proposals

3. Budget discussion

County council launches consultation

The Essential Guide:



Margate's Dreamland

Everything you need to know about the iconic British seaside theme park



FEATURED PHOTO GALLERY: Wrotham-based race team Motorbase dominated the final races of this season's British Touring Car Championship, taking two chequered flags and one second place finish.

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Top Three Blogs



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Winter sets in making county colder

2. Exam pressure

And why you shouldn't worry too much

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Reminders of our own mortality

Results of the KoS Online Poll

How will England fare in Euro 2016?

- 1 Win it - 40%
- 2 Semi-finals - 20%
- 3 Quarter-finals - 40%
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Is green light for grammar start of wave of selectives?

The education secretary's decision to allow the Weald of Kent Academy to open an annexe in Sevenoaks has re-ignited a bitter education battle...

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

THE decision to allow the much-discussed, much-campaigned for grammar school annexe in Sevenoaks to go ahead has opened a political Pandora's Box.

After years of wrangling, the all girls Weald of Kent Academy in Tonbridge was told by education secretary Nicky Morgan it could open the satellite site on the former premises of the Wildernes School.

Taking in 450 girls and expected to open in 2017, it will be the first grammar in Sevenoaks – the only major Kent town without one – and in an area where selective places are traditionally under enormous pressure.

But the fact the school is, if not in name then certainly in perception, a 'new' school elevated the decision to the very top of the national news agenda at the end of the week.

Labour passed laws in 1998 banning the creation of new grammars but the Weald of Kent school's plan was approved because existing schools are allowed to expand if there is sufficient demand.

The move could open the door for a new wave of grammars, and at least eight more regions are preparing applications for extensions at local schools, according to reports.

On Friday, there were claims of a move to build grammars in counties across England, with schools in Sutton, Buckinghamshire and Dorset confirming they would look to expand in light of the Government decision.

However, the government insists the Sevenoaks decision does not herald a change in policy.

Nicky Morgan's written statement to the Commons insisted she was satisfied the proposal was a "genuine extension" of the current school, and not a change in policy on selective schools.

She said: "My decision in this case has been taken on the basis of the proposal from the Weald of Kent, in line with legislation and criteria determining what constitutes an expansion.

kentnews.co.uk kent-life.co.uk

REACTION: GORDON COWAN, KCC LABOUR GROUP LEADER

THE decision to give the green light to the proposal for a so-called annexe in Sevenoaks to the Weald of Kent grammar school comes after months of uncertainty but it looks more like a move to appease right-wing Conservative Party members, rather than provide a solution to the problems in Sevenoaks.

And it is clear that there are problems. Over the years, children living in the Sevenoaks area have been given a false promise: that by passing the Kent Test they will have access to first-class educational opportunities. However, this has been at the cost of a 20-mile round trip, often using unreliable bus services.

Under the last Labour government, a proposal took shape to provide a new academy, incorporating the successful Bradbourne Girls' School and the failing Wildernes Boys' School.

Sponsored by KCC and Sevenoaks School, and with public investment of over £18m in new facilities, Knole Academy is becoming an excellent facility.

Under the guiding hand of the inspirational head teacher, Mary Boyle, the school is making remarkable progress, including a thriving 'grammar' stream.

While at the same time, a new all-ability secondary free school is due to occupy part of the Wildernes site. Enough, one would think, to take care of current and future demand for secondary places in Sevenoaks.

But, not satisfied with that, a small group of parents launched a campaign for a grammar school annexe in the town.

The proposed new school is ten miles from its host institution. It is absurd to describe it as an 'annexe' of the existing school.

Commonsense - if not the government's lawyers - tells us that Ms Morgan has, in effect, given the green light to the establishment of a wholly new grammar school. This decision is not only open to legal challenge but goes against decades of consensus that there be no new grammar schools set up in England.

Kent Labour is against the

expansion of grammar schools for good reasons. The evidence is absolutely clear: selection at 11 entrenches, rather than challenges, educational inequality.

The Kent Test itself is unfair; efforts to make it 'tutor-proof' have failed. Practising and coaching is banned in state junior schools, while tutoring is widespread in prep schools unaffordable to most of us. The proof they are the domain of the well-off middle classes lies in the fact few pupils receive free school meals compared with other state schools.

The argument in favour of grammar schools you always hear is about 'social mobility': working class children get a leg up, they say. While this may have been true in the 1950s, it is no longer. Many never achieve fulfilment: a personal loss, yes, but much more it's a significant loss of talent to Britain at a time when we most need it.

Selection at 11 is unfair, unnecessary and divisive. Education should open doors for all children, not close them.



GREEN LIGHT: Education minister Nicky Morgan (left) has said a grammar school can open an annexe in Sevenoaks, despite the fact they will be 10 miles apart

"It does not reflect a change in this government's position on selective schools."

Kent County Council leader Paul Carter said he was "very pleased" that the expansion has been given approval.

He said: "Weald of Kent had been

constrained by not being able to expand on its existing site because, frankly, it's full up. Therefore, expansion on an alternative site in Sevenoaks, I believe to be the right thing to do."

In her statement, the education secretary said: "It is this government's North & West

policy that all good and outstanding schools should be able to expand to offer excellent places to local students."

But shadow education secretary Lucy Powell described the move as a "hugely backward step".

She said: "Having made social mobility the centre of his conference

speech, David Cameron should look at the clear evidence on grammar schools; they do not increase equality of opportunity, they make it worse."

Ms Powell has since called on Mrs Morgan to publish the advice given to her by government officials on the Kent expansion.

Week ending October 18, 2015 **11**

Commons committee told Stack cripples economy not just county

Transport MPs hear that using M20 to deal with disruptions at the Channel ports causes 'absolute misery' in Kent and that Highways England will go public with alternatives at the end of November...

Tom Pyman

Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

KENT County Council leader Paul Carter says he continues to push for a large lorry park somewhere in the county as the long-term solution to the problems caused by Operation Stack.

Alternatives to turning the M20 into a giant lorry park when there is any hold-up at the Channel ports were discussed at the House of Commons on Wednesday during a transport committee hearing.

The hearing follows one of the most disrupted summers when a combination of striking French workers and migrants trying to illegally enter the UK caused havoc at the cross-Channel transport hubs and forced large parts of the motorway to grind to a halt as freight lorries backed up.

The Tory KCC leader said: "It's absolute misery – not just in that corridor but because everybody is ducking and diving trying to find a route and a cut through to get to where they need to be.

"It's literally from the whole of Maidstone down to the coastal strip all the way across to east Kent."

Cllr Carter says he wants George Osborne to make a pledge to pick up the £150m tab for a lorry park in his comprehensive spending review next month.

Highways England says it hopes to go public with alternatives to Stack before the end of November.

A spokesperson said: "We are continuing to work hard with our partners to identify improvements to Operation Stack and Wednesday's hearing was a useful opportunity to tell the committee about the real progress that is being made.

"A wide range of options are being considered including parking for lorries near the M20. We will do all we can to have solutions in place as soon as possible, including carrying out early consultations with the public.

"We are determined to make sure any identified improvements offer value for money and that planning, environment and construction issues are fully considered."

Also present at the meeting was Natalie Chapman, head of policy at the Tunbridge Wells-based Freight Transport Association.

She told KoS: "These things won't happen overnight but as long as we are confident that everything is being done to make sure something is being put in place as quickly as possible, that's the main thing.

"We need to do everything we can to avoid closing the M20 for any period but especially like the period we saw this summer which was completely unacceptable.



STACKED: What to do with the lorries? Despite being the home of Eurotunnel, Shepway does not want them but neither does anywhere else

"It was absolutely devastating on local businesses and residents but also on national and international UK exports."

Giving evidence to the committee on behalf of Shepway District Council was councillor Jennifer Hollingsbee.

With the Eurotunnel terminal within its boundaries, Shepway is frequently suggested as the best place for a permanent lorry park, yet when this happens, the plans face a barrage of local opposition.

The Conservative said: "The major issue for Shepway is the movement of traffic. There were 11,000 vehicles coming and 15,000 going out during Operation Stack and a lot of business-

es have suffered. It has a real knock-on effect on people and it's not acceptable."

The FTA's Ms Chapman added: "If any good can come out of what we saw in the summer, it is that finally the government are aware that this is of national and international significance and does need to be sorted.

"The cost of not doing anything is huge and we need to spend some money to get something in place to protect the economy. The funding simply has to be delivered and we will be lobbying hard to get it done.

"We are pleased that the transport committee is conducting an inquiry into this to try and find a solution."

THE STORY SO FAR

OPERATION Stack was implemented 48 times between 1997 and January 2015, with an average duration of five to six days a year.

However, in the first seven months of 2015, Stack was implemented on the M20 for 32 days - five in January and then almost continuously in late June and throughout July.

The economic impacts of Stack are significant both locally and national, as freight traffic literally grinds to a halt, while the roads surrounding the M20 jam too - effectively stifling local trade.

Kent benefits hugely from its logistics and tourism sectors and these areas reported a loss during the implementation of Stack over the summer months.

Figures produced by KCC, the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce and tourism champions Visit Kent suggest an estimated cost to the Kent and Medway economy of around £1.45m per

day, meaning over the course of the 32 days in 2015, it racked up a cost of £46m.

Some 45 per cent of tourism businesses reported cancellations, with 59 per cent considering that they had lost up to 20 per cent of business as a result of Operation Stack.

The initial reason for its implementation was the result of industrial action by ferry workers at the Port of Calais, it was exacerbated by migrants trespassing in the Channel Tunnel.

At its peak there were 7,000 HGVs taking 36 hours to work through the queue.

An alternative proposal was agreed recently which saw the currently vacant Manston Airport agree to take some lorries in the event of a lorry backlog. However, that has been derided by many who say the plan will spread the traffic chaos across the entire east of the county.



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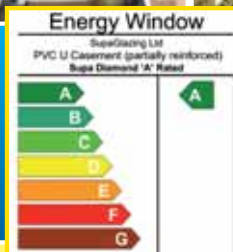
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KCC BUDGET: What now for council already cut to the bone?

Leader Paul Carter says council is 'squeezed in all directions' admitting it faces a possible shortfall of £80m next year, that 500 more jobs could be lost over the next five years and that the new living wage will add to the pressure....

By Jamie Weir

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ANOTHER 500 jobs are likely to be shaved off Kent County Council's (KCC) books over the next five years along with more brutal cuts to public services as the authority braces itself for a further massive axe in its funding.

Over the past five years few have felt the keen edge of the austerity axe as acutely as local government, and as KCC announced a consultation into its budget on Wednesday, there was little optimism of any imminent improvement.

That despite Paul Carter calling on Whitehall to give local authorities "a bit of a break".

However, no-one knows for sure just how badly local government is going to be hit next year. That will become clear at the end of next month when chancellor George Osborne delivers his spending review; setting out the government's road to how it will save £20bn between now and 2015 to tackle the deficit.

Despite that, KCC says it looks likely it'll need to shave around £80 million from its spend next year - it's already taken a £433m hit since 2010.

It is also intending to raise some cash to cushion the cuts, proposing a council tax increase of 1.99 per cent - just under the point which would spark a local referendum to poll people's views. That would bring in an extra £11m.

That, says the council, amounts to an increase for those living in an average band C property of just 37 pence a week.

It forms part of a host of proposals which make up the consultation process.

But make no mistake, the cuts have now hit the bone.

Council leader, the Conservative Paul Carter, said: "We're being squeezed in all directions. Local government has taken a greater proportion of the austerity cuts than any other spending department across the public sector. On the adage that you can't keep doing that forever, or you don't kill the goose that lays the golden eggs, we've now got to have a little acceptance that with demand for services increasing we have to be given a bit of a break.

"That'll be particularly important in the arena of adult social care where we're facing a real increase in demand with a lot less money from central government."

Politicians of all colours are united in their North & West

call for more funding to ease the pain.

This year's cuts will result in job losses - but the council is coy about where exactly the 'efficiencies' may come from.

Cllr Carter hinted that back office roles could be slimmed down.

Jobs across KCC have already been slashed by around 2,500

Cllr Carter said: "The pressures are greater and greater and there are only so many efficiencies we can take and we're getting very close to the bone. There are further efficiencies to be taken through the application of technology and delivering back office support and assessment and processes, but there comes to a point where you can go no further."

Labour's Derek Smyth, who represents Ashford South, was damning of the situation, telling KoS that 'savagely cuts' were leading to poorer service delivery to people across the county.

He said: "The concerns over job cuts have largely been masked by this illusion which has been put forward of transformation and making efficiencies, with much being made of maintaining frontline services.

"The fact is that these services aren't being maintained as we've already seen with children's centres being closed and community wardens being reduced.

"Even the ruling party are now talking about cutting frontline services; they are now recognising a tipping point and are even willing to say so."

The council, in setting out the budget consultation said that while there was talk of slicing frontline services, it was important the public gave their feedback during the consultation to help guide those cuts.

KCC's finance chief John Simmonds said: "We've been very careful over the years, and I doubt many would notice any great impact to frontline services.

"Hopefully, we can keep it that way, but we now have to look at a variety of areas where we can make savings. One of those areas is subsidised bus services. We are huge providers for Stagecoach and Arriva and we are having discussions on how we can get value for money. Somewhere within that deal there is room to improve and we can continue providing those services but at a better deal."

Cllr Simmonds said that although the council foresaw around 100 job losses a year over the next five, he was hopeful that it wouldn't be as severe.

He said: "We've been very careful with recruitment so there is some spare capacity, and



CUT TO THE BONE: KCC faces some huge decisions on where and how to spend its dwindling funds. Now is the chance to have your say on the direction of future spending. Cllrs John Simmonds (above) and Paul Carter (below).



there's a voluntary redundancy fund which we regularly top up so I'd imagine the net impact will be far lower than that.

"Since we've become more of a commissioning authority, a lot of the responsibility goes out to the outside providers rather than ourselves."

There has been a blow for KCC as a

commissioning authority recently though, with the introduction of the new living wage which is set to be introduced in April 2016.

While the council already pays its own staff above the wage, KCC says costs for its suppliers – many of which are already struggling – are likely to be passed straight on to the authority.

The council has calculated that it could cost between £12 and £14m extra for them, but there is hope that a solution will come from government.

Cllr Carter told KoS: "The wage bill will increase, and much of that cost is likely to be passed on to us. We believe that needs to be recognised by central government. The living wage

has to be funded by central government in my view or it would be massively unfair.

"I'm a big supporter of it, but we now need to see government put their money where their mouth is and fund it in the settlement."

While the Conservative administration is hoping for a fair settlement

from government on the living wage, opposition leader, Ukip's Roger Latchford, says Kent is a special case which should get more cash for a number of reasons.

Cllr Latchford told KoS: "The UK is spending £27m on overseas aid, and yet here is central government cutting grants to local government who are working to look after our old age pensioners.

"I think that as Kent is the gateway to the UK, we are a special case. We have more heavy traffic on our roads, and are expected to maintain those roads, and I believe we should have a greater slice of the cash from government to do that. Immigration is also a key issue. We have had a massive increase in unaccompanied children and that's growing. As the authority with statutory responsibility it's costing us a lot of money.

"Kent is a special case, and I believe that government should be sharpening up its act and ensuring we get fairer payment. Central government has a lot to answer for; they'll claim that they inherited a poor economy, but they cannot live on that excuse forever and it's about time they started sorting the situation out."

Conservative Cllr Simmonds added: "We need people to accept that the modest council tax increase we're asking for will go towards supporting those who are most vulnerable. We have found that people in past consultations have supported that, and now we want everybody to make their comments on this new consultation and let their views be known.

"It's really important that we have the public's views on this consultation, so I hope we get as much feedback on it as possible."



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Vulcan takes final salute from county

The Cold War bomber attracted big crowds as it cruised over Kent as part of a farewell tour from Gravesend to Ashford

By Luke May

luke.may@archant.co.uk

THOUSANDS looked to the skies last weekend to catch a glimpse of a famous Cold War bomber on the latest leg of its farewell tour.

The Vulcan XH558 bomber, dubbed 'the spirit of Great Britain', flew down from its base in Doncaster as part of a flypast across the whole of the south of England last Sunday. On the Saturday, it had flown across the north of the county.

It entered the county in Gravesend at around 1.40pm on Sunday. In the space of just 30 minutes it flew along the coast past Whitstable and Herne Bay, out past Manston, down to Dover and then up across Ashford before heading into East Sussex.

The plane was a majestic sight. With its distinct wings and rumbling roar, it had originally been built in the 1950s as a long range bomber capable of flying atomic bombs to Russia if the Cold War reached a crisis point.

It would become recognised as part of the UK's nuclear deterrent. It also played a key role during the Falklands conflict, flying missions to take part in key bombing raids.

Restored ten years ago by enthusiasts, the plane will be retired for the final time this month after it lost key financial backers.

Many people in Gravesend took to Windmill Hill to watch the flypast, spectator Dean Byrne from Northfleet said: "I first saw the Vulcan as a child, but I've seen it three times at the Goodwood Festival of Speed, it's a spectacle to see up in the air."

"I think it's awesome to watch, my partner Natalie had never seen it before and I thought as this was the last time it would fly over Kent we'd better watch it."

"It's the sound as well; it really grabs the attention when it flies past. I'd say there were around 80 to 100 people watching."

"Considering what it was used for during the Cold War and it saw action in the Falklands, I think it's more a sign of respect from the people watching."



DISTINCTIVE: Bomber cruised over our skies on Sunday

A spokesperson from the Vulcan to the Sky trust said: "The whole day went very well, we had a number of large crowds all along the route to give her a fond farewell."



RETIRED: It will make its very final flight later this month



SNAPPED: Around 100 people watched the plane on Windmill Hill





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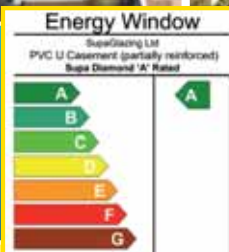
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SAGA: Chris Wells (inset) is once again facing criticism over his handling of the future of Thanet's Manston Airport.

Manston prises Ukip's grip from council control as tempers flare

Another week, another twist in the saga over the Thanet airport. **Jamie Weir** takes a look at how Ukip leader Chris Wells has found the weight of responsibility with public funds potentially his downfall

PRESSURE is growing on Thanet District Council's Ukip leader Chris Wells to step down after another defection this week saw his party lose its grip on the local authority.

Jeff Elenor's decision to quit the party, which won control of its only council at May's local elections, was the fifth Ukip defection and saw the party's majority slide. The council is now hung although Ukip remain comfortably the dominant party.

But it has come unstuck over its election vow to revive Manston Airport, which closed in May 2014.

Like the Labour leader who came before him, the reality of the situation – and the complexities of any deal with an American firm which has long courted the site – has proved far from straight forward to deal with.

Now Cllr Wells is facing calls for him to quit after the US investment firm RiverOak – which itself has been far from transparent – was fiercely critical of his handling of the matter.

But the beleaguered council chief insists if people were aware of the stumbling blocks he and his party faced, and its responsibility for the millions of pounds of public money any use of a compulsory purchase order (CPO) – which Ukip vowed to serve on the site's new owners – they would understand the reason no movement has yet been made.

And he denies further claims more Ukip councillors are set to jump ship too.

Cllr Wells told KoS: "I think what's happening is we're seeing inexperienced councillors coming under seri-

ous pressure from a very nasty campaign group and being really quite frightened. That's the reason we've seen some leave."

Before the election, Ukip's prospective candidates promised that they would get the airport – which closed in May 2014 with the loss of around 150 jobs – going again.

Banners were unfurled which proclaimed Ukip was the only party that would make this happen for the local community, with an eager Nigel Farage having his picture taken against the backdrop.

When Manston closed, the airport site was sold to two developers Trevor Cartner and Chris Musgrave. The duo are behind the Discovery Park in Sandwich – the former Pfizer complex. They have since put forward proposals to build a mixed use development on the site featuring housing, commercial and leisure facilities.

Manston Airport, it should be noted, has consistently failed to work as an aviation hub despite numerous efforts to transform its fortunes since it was sold by the Ministry of Defence in the late 1980s.

But it has an extremely vocal campaign group who remain convinced it can still yet be a vital cog in the regeneration of Thanet and the wider east Kent.

They believe a CPO – a power held by local authorities to force purchase land for the greater good of the community – is the answer.

Ukip vowed to serve one before the election but for it to succeed, it needs



SPLIT: Ukip is crumbling on Thanet District Council

both a sound legal base and for the council to have the relevant funding.

RiverOak, which wants to turn the airport into a freight airport, insists it will cover the costs, but the need to cover public money is essential. Cllr Wells says RiverOak continues to not provide the necessary details of its investors.

But earlier in the week, the company said Cllr Wells was proving a 'roadblock'.

In an email it published on its website, responding to a host of concerns from Cllr Wells seeking guarantees over the protection of public funding and the identity and commitment of RiverOak's investors, the firm's chief investment officer George Yerrall said he was "disappointed and distressed" and with the "clear message" there was no interest in RiverOak being behind a CPO.

He added: "I find your list of... issues to be completely without merit and nothing more than another at-

tempt to inexplicably throw one road block after another in front of us in order for you to carry out whatever your real agenda might be."

But Cllr Wells hit back. He told KoS: "As far as I'm concerned, it's straightforward."

"They (RiverOak) seem to have become uncomfortable with the process and have chosen to act in a reprehensible manner and put this email in the public domain."

"After talking to them, they seem to have been woefully underprepared to actually go forward with the CPO process. I would like to put the airport back into use today if I could, but I have to follow a process."

But it isn't just RiverOak saying Cllr Wells is proving difficult to work with; a number of those who used to be in his own party have said the same thing.

Four members of Ukip jumped ship in September with the latest, Jeff Elenor, saying that Cllr Wells' leadership could no longer be tolerated.

One of the original defectors Beverly Martin said others looked likely to follow.

She told KoS: "We don't know for certain whether others are coming, but there have been more than just hints from some. There are serious concerns within the Ukip councillor group over the leadership style which we've seen from Cllr Wells."

It's an accusation which Cllr Wells is having none of, choosing three very particular words to describe his views on the statement.

He said: "Rubbish. Balderdash. Poppycock. If you're involved in commercially sensitive negotiations which require confidentiality, you can't send out information bulletins every five minutes."

Both Thanet North MP, Sir Roger Gale, and South Thanet MP Craig Mackinlay, have joined the chorus calling for him to quit.

The chairman of the Save Manston Airport group, Beau Webber, added: "I think the time has come for him to step down as RiverOak has lost faith in him, we have lost faith in him, his electorate is losing faith in him and his own party seem to be losing faith in him."

The various defections have also heaped pressure on Cllr Wells to walk, but he says he is having none of it.

Cllr Wells told KoS: "It's very kind of Roger Gale to suggest I seek employment elsewhere. I'd suggest that he should start behaving like the MP for his constituency, rather than the MP for RiverOak."

"It is a bit of a rollercoaster in Thanet right now. I have no intention of walking away from my leadership; I will see the job through."

The first step Cllr Wells will take is holding a meeting on the CPO process.

He said: "The cabinet meeting will be on October 29 at which all of the papers will be out there for councillors to see, and we'll put the record straight then. I believe in being honest and straightforward in what we're doing about Manston."

What do you think? Share your views and join the debate: email us at editorial@kosmedia.co.uk.

The fishing industry's evolution as it adjusts to tastes and quotas

National Seafood Week took place this week - an initiative designed to swell our interest in the bounty of our seas. But, as **Chris Murphy** discovers, those involved in the industry say it has its ups and downs

DESPITE being surrounded on three sides by water, it is a little too easy to overlook one of the county's most historic and significant industries.

Harvesting our rich waters has been carried out by generations of fishermen and today remains as in-demand as ever, yet facing a host of challenges.

Not only is there the ever-evolving tastes of the population to accommodate, but so too the relentless pressures from Europe and the need to protect our seas from over fishing or environmental damage.

This week has been national Seafood Week, the latest bid to highlight the fruits de la mer and encourage more people to experiment and experience the delights of fish.

Organised by Seafish, a non-departmental public body set up by the Fisheries Act 1981 to improve efficiency and raise standards across the seafood industry.

"We are aiming to establish Seafood Week as the jewel in our crown

when it comes to helping industry increase the consumption of seafood across the board in the UK," explains Mel Groundsell, corporate relations director at Seafish.

"We're really excited and believe it presents a great opportunity to get people cooking, eating, and buying more seafood."

In the county, there are two key groups whose existence depends on the trade - the fishermen themselves and those they supply - whether it be the stalls which litter our seafronts selling the fresh catch and a range of shellfish, or the restaurants; many of which specialise in seafood.

Terry Noakes is the boss at Folkestone Trawlers a seafood wholesaler with its own fleet of boats which delivers direct to its harbour outlet and then on to its many suppliers.

His plight has entered the political arena and he is desperate for the UK to get out of the European Union (EU), so that the monthly fishing quotas - designed to ensure certain areas are not over fished - are scrapped.

He told us: "We are catching skate



FISH: The demand for a top quality catch shows no signs of slowing - but quotas are creating headaches

where skate has never been before, in really shallow waters because there is so much of it, but the EU is saying the fish are not there. It is crazy.

"We have a monthly quota and sometimes we can catch that in just a few days. In March, we did it all in one day."

The highly controversial quota system - which sees a fixed amount of particular types of fish, normally judged on weight, allocated to each

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Durrant House Hotel, Bideford



HARBOUR: Folkestone has long been a key venue for the fishing industry and boasts a number of seafood stalls, while Whitstable (right) has become a seafood hotspot



area and then distributed between the big and small fishing operations – has frequently come under fire by Kent trawlers who say their business is being suffocated as a consequence.

Adds Mr Noakes: "It is a ludicrous system because we know there is plenty of fish in our waters. We stay within our 12-mile limit, but the trouble is, all the European boats are coming into our waters too."

"We want to govern our own waters to keep this industry alive. We either get out of the EU or reform the fishing treaty or a lot of fishermen are going to lose their livelihoods."

"For most of the month my boat is doing nothing, so I have to lease fish from other companies just to keep going. Something needs to be done."

On land, those businesses which rely on the daily catch have experienced something of a rollercoaster in recent years.

Tony Pye has run one of the most popular fish stalls in the county for 50 years. Chummy's, which for years has occupied a prime space on the marina wall at Folkestone, was struggling ten years ago.

But rather than cut his losses, he took a gamble and invested heavily.

He told us: "That was 10 years ago when the whole industry was in turmoil and no one really knew if fishing on a commercial basis had any future."

"People were more reluctant to travel, so if they won't come to us, we decided we would go to them."

The investment saw three other

stalls established elsewhere in the county and his traditional home in Folkestone dramatically expanded.

He said: "It was a big gamble, but something had to be done. Our expenses were staying the same but the income was reducing. A lot of people may have wanted to give it all up at that point, but we decided to grow the business instead."

"Now all these years later and we are doing well again. I am delighted with the way the industry is heading now. I don't suppose every fisherman is happy, but things are not too bad."

He too is at the sharp end of just what is expected by a demanding public. He explained: "One thing that has changed is tastes. We are selling a lot more prawns and lobsters than we

ever used to. The lobsters are from the Kent coast but the prawns are brought in. It seems people are getting a taste for the posher things in life and we are determined to adapt to that taste. It's the only way to stay ahead."

Delia Fitt works at Wheeler's Oyster Bar in Whitstable, a perennially popular seafood counter and restaurant.

She says the oyster and whelk crop has been bumper this year, but joined the chorus of concerns over EU restrictions.

She too wants to see parts of the sea to be left 'fallow' for three or four years "but once these people get an area closed, they like to keep it that way for too long".

She added: "There are a lot of common market laws, rules and regulations

they keep throwing at us, and that is causing some problems. But things are OK. I think we're all surviving."

Val Lamb's family has run the Mannings Seafood Stall in Margate for 53 years. And there, at least, business is booming.

She told us: "I was here with my parents when it all started. I was five at the time, and now I am here running it myself. And it could not be better. With Dreamland opening up – this has been our best year ever."

"We have had no trouble with supplies. Kent is one of the best places to be for shellfish."

"We catch our whelks ourselves and there doesn't seem to be a shortage of anything else. I could not be happier."



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Dreamland's iconic Scenic Railway rattles back to life

After nearly a decade away, the iconic Margate theme park ride is once again thrilling passengers despite the fire and the delays – it's been a bumpy ride...

By Jamie Weir

Jamie.Weir@archant.co.uk

DREAMLAND'S Scenic Railway came back to life for the first time in almost a decade as the latest part in the park's revival jigsaw saw this week.

Joining the party rather late – the park itself re-opened back in June – it is the biggest and most iconic of all the rides at the Margate attraction and one which is remembered fondly by so many people who visited the park during its heyday.

Its return, in recent years, was in some doubt after a third of the historic wooden structure was destroyed in an arson attack in 2008.

The Grand II-listed ride – made out of wood and first opened back in 1920 – has been completely re-built to ensure it meets all modern safety standards. It still has a brakeman, however, who rides the rollercoaster, manually applying the brakes to slow it down as it goes around the corners.

Dreamland's chief executive officer

Eddie Kemsley told KoS it was great to have the ride back up and running: "The Scenic Railway is the staple, so all the people who've been here for over almost a century, have been on this ride. This is the thing which has remained the same while other rides have come and gone and the park has changed. It's always been here and is the ride that generation after generation remember going on."

"It's a Grade II listed structure; it's a piece of art, and we try and remain as true and authentic as possible to the original design. However, that did present challenges as we were working with what is a 20th century ride in a 21st century world. We had to make sure it measured up to the different standards that it needs



for visitors.

"You won't get this anywhere else; it's a really authentic ride."

There are lots of things that are whizzier and more high-tech but it's not one of those push button experiences which are the same every time. The guy that's in charge is the brakeman, and he con-

trols the experience for people on the ride. It's really different depending on where you sit – the front really is very different to the back."

Three former brakemen were at the opening on Thursday morning. They told KoS things were a bit different in their day.

Former brakeman, Terrence 'Ginger' Evans who worked the track in the mid-1960s said: "It's a lot tamer now than it used to be – it was pretty wild at times as there weren't seat belts so people would stand up. We couldn't do anything about it; we'd be shouting at them but they wouldn't listen."

"It used to be when the pubs shut," adds Dick Faulkner, who worked on the track between 1972 and 1989. "You'd see them coming up the slope and into the park and then we'd keep going until the lights went out."

Mr Evans added: "There used to be a tunnel which had a sign that said 'danger sit down' – one chap decided to stand up, hit the beam and when we came out of the tunnel his face was all bloody and he'd lost his teeth. As I was also the trackman, I had to

go in the tunnel and find those teeth – when I came out with them he gave me half a crown as a reward!"

And although it was a gentler experience than most modern rollercoasters it still had the capacity to turn some people green.

Mr Faulkner said: "I didn't like it



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RETURN: The Scenic Railway is back...



when they used to be sick on the train. I had one guy who just managed to get off and was sick just over the fence. The problem was that there was a cafe looking at the area he was vomiting and all these poor ladies were sat there watching this man being sick all over the place."

Despite the odd unfortunate incident, Dave Smith, who worked the ride in the 1980s, said it was a ride everyone wanted to work on.

He told KoS: "It wasn't like working – you'd look forward to coming here and getting on the brake. It was the ride that everyone wanted to be

on, whether they were workers or people visiting the park."

Dick Faulkner added: "These wooden rides are wonderful; they're just the best; they have a life of their own because the weather affects the speed. Some days it'll be fast, and others slower. They have their very

own character and it's really something which can't be compared with modern rides."

A key part of the seaside's town on-going revival, the park has already been responsible for a 55 per cent hike in hotel bookings in the town.

THE RIDE...

AS soon as you get on the Scenic Railway, it's apparent it is unlike any modern rollercoaster.

Trading speed and spins for something many, particularly if they aren't fans of such rides, may think is better – it gives the rider a feeling of connection to the experience.

It has no shoulder restraints, so people riding it can move around and experience the bumps and the jolts.

That might sound a bit uncomfortable, but it isn't – it helps immerse people into the ride as they whirl around the track.

Riding at the back of the carriages gives the illusion of a bit more speed, slightly bumping people off the seat as they roll through the faster sections of track. The creaking of the wooden timber helps to remind people that this ride is a historic artefact. But for those fearful it's not up to scratch; a carpenter checks every bit of the ride on a daily basis to ensure it's fit for fun.

The whole thing is reliant on having the momentum to get around to the end and on one run at its opening, due to just one passenger (me) and the all-important brakeman being on board it managed to run about 20 metres short of the platform.

The chance of riding this on your own seems remote, however. Either way, it's hard to leave without a smile on your face.



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Winners' joy at food and drink award success

The third annual Kent Life and Kent on Sunday Food & Drink Awards prize ceremony took place on Thursday and proved a huge success. But just who were named the cream of the crop?

By Luke May
Luke.May@archant.co.uk

THE cream of the county's food and drink industry gathered in Ashford on Thursday night for the third Kent Life and Kent on Sunday Food & Drink Awards.

The glitzy black-tie event, staged at the Ashford International Hotel, was the culmination of months of nominations by the readers of this newspaper and our sister title, the county magazine Kent Life, and a selection process of a panel of top judges.

Restaurants, pubs, tea houses and producers of food and drink all contested their respective prizes in the 12 categories up for grabs.

BBC Radio Kent presenter Andy Garland, of Sunday Gardening on the station, hosted the ceremony.

Winners included Dev Biswal of Margate and Canterbury's acclaimed Ambrette who was declared chef of the year; Chapter One in Locksbottom, near Orpington, won restaurant of the year, and The Cheese Box in Whitstable took the crown as top independent retailer.

All of the finalists were nominated by readers, before a shortlist was compiled. A team of judges then toured the venues to select the eventual winners.

The first of the night's award winners; Faversham cafe/bistro The Yard, picked up the newcomer of the year award.

An emotional manager Elenor Lambert said: "We're only a few months old and I'm surprised the restaurant even reached fruition.

"We worked so hard for this; I imagine it will add impetus for what we already believe in.

"We're young so maybe this award means we'll be taken more seriously."

Tenterden's Chapel Down was named drink producer of the year for its range of fine wines.

Chief executive Frazer Thompson described the impact the county has had on their wine: "If you start with great fruit you can make great wine, and Kent has the infrastructure, the people and the passion for produce that enables us to get great fruit in."

Simon Bezuidenhout, of Chapter One, was delighted after his restaurant won for the second year on the trot.

He said: "We didn't expect to win it again; we're all just very honoured and humbled.

"It's a sign of the dedication of the whole team. We just want to strive to continue the excellence."

Kent on Sunday editor Chris Britcher joined Kent Life editor Sarah Sturt on stage at the end of the evening to announce that this year's Kent 'food and drink hero' was Bob Taylor, vice chairman of the Kent Farmers' Market Association and organiser of the Shipbourne Farmers' Market, near Tonbridge.

Mr Taylor said "For all of tonight's winners the award is an amazing achievement, especially for me as I had no idea I was being put forward, I'm absolutely over the moon.

"The real heroes are the 500 odd producers and stallholders who not only make or grow all their own produce but then get up at some unearthly hour to attend all our markets week in and week out."

The night featured guests from across the county, and was a fantastic opportunity to enjoy the best of Kent.

Simon Irwin, publisher of both Kent on Sunday and Kent Life, said after the event: "It was another great event, and a great celebration of the county's wonderful food and drink industry.

"We are so grateful for everyone who sent in nominations and to the event's sponsors – without whom this would not have been possible."

North & West

kent-life.co.uk kentnews.co.uk



Food Producer of the Year, sponsored by Perrys Accountants,
Curiously Kentish, Birchington



Drink Producer of the Year, sponsored by Motorline
Maserati Chapel Down, Tenterden



Farmers' Market of the Year
Penshurst Farmers' Market

Farmshop of the Year
MB Farmshop, Stockbury

Newcomer of the Year, sponsored by Clive Emson Auctioneers
The Yard, Faversham



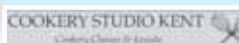
Independent Retailer of the Year, sponsored by Illuminate Skin Clinics
The Cheese Box, Whitstable



Kent Life and Kent on Sunday Food and Drink Hero
Bob Taylor



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Women in Kent who joined the suffrage movement to get vote

As a new film about Suffragettes makes its way into cinemas, **Molly Kersey** examines the role that the campaign played in the county, and the women who worked hard to help achieve equal rights...

FEATURING a host of famous faces, new film *Suffragette* will be highlighting the struggle undertaken by campaigners to achieve votes for women.

The suffrage movement saw women fighting for equal rights in the late 19th to early 20th century, facing adversity and danger in the process.

Kent had a big role to play, with a number of suffrage groups scattered across the county.

Anne Logan, of the University of Kent's school of social policy, said: "It got going pretty early on in Tunbridge Wells, probably as far back as the 1860s there was support."

Many associate suffragettes with more extreme elements of the movement - such as smashed windows and arson. Indeed, the Nevill Ground cricket venue in Tunbridge Wells was damaged in a suspected militant suffragette arson attack. A copy of a suffragette newspaper was left at the scene, but nobody was ever tried.

However, many of those who supported the movement were law-abiding citizens and a large number took part in the Women's Pilgrimage event in 1913, which saw people follow the traditional pilgrim's route through the county as a reminder of all those campaigning peacefully.

Dr Logan added: "The militant suffragettes were a minority of the movement as a whole, because not everybody wants to break the law, plenty of women supported the idea of having

the vote without smashing windows and that sort of thing. The militant group who are the focus of the film, called the WSPU (The Women's Social and Political Union), was formed in 1903 by Emmeline Pankhurst. The campaign had already been going on for 40 odd years by then."

And controversy surrounds just how effective militant tactics were.

"The argument raged at the time and it has raged ever since," said Dr Logan. "You could say the movement was going strong without that sort of thing. It put people off as much as it might have attracted people to the movement. But this sort of thing is what gets the headlines. The suffragettes were one of the first groups who knew about using the media."

Carolyn Oulton, of Canterbury Christ Church University, added: "There were always people saying 'your violent actions have put the cause back by 50 years', but their response was 'we're being talked about and you're not'."

Dr Logan said: "In Kent as a whole, Tunbridge Wells, Ramsgate and Sevenoaks were the places that had really large branches of the non-militant society. Emily Wilding-Davison was the woman at the Derby, who died when she stepped in front of the King's horse. A few months earlier she was in Tunbridge Wells taking part in a protest in the Opera House, at the meeting of the Liberal Party.

"Four women from the town are on the Suffragette roll of honour, which

is the list of women who were arrested. One of them, Irene Tillard, was arrested for attempting to present a petition to the Prime Minister. She was sent to prison for that. She was outside No 10 Downing Street. Her sister was arrested for demonstrating at the House of Commons."

Tunbridge Wells also had branches of major suffrage organisations including the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS).

"You had a lot of single, reasonably well-off ladies and they had a lot of servants as well, so if you look at the census for Tunbridge Wells it has far more women than men in the population," explained Dr Logan.

"Some people refused to obey the law at all, but some people engaged in civil disobedience, like refusing to fill in the census return or pay tax.

"Sometimes when they did fill in the census form they wrote suffragette, and we found one in Tunbridge Wells. The lady of the house was the treasurer of the Woman's Suffrage Society. Two of her servants have got suffragette written by their names as well, so it wasn't necessarily just the wealthy ladies who were involved."

This rebellion was echoed in Gillingham, where Laura Ainsworth arranged a boycott of the 1911 census with women in the town - adopting the slogan 'If we don't count - we are not going to be counted.'

So how damaging would be denied the vote have been to women?

"In terms of self respect, if nothing



else, when you give someone a vote you tell them that you are going to treat them like an adult," explained Professor Oulton.

"Some women at the time said they were being classed with 'criminals, minors and idiots', as they were the only other groups who were not allowed to vote. To tell a woman she was unable to vote was basically to treat her like a child, or someone who was morally or mentally incapable."

In 1918, the vote was given to women over 30.

And, Professor Oulton explains, there could have been a number of reasons behind this decision.

"I think any movement gathers

momentum very slowly and it's hard to take a moment and say 'this is when everything changed'. But I think it would be naïve to say that the war had nothing to do with it.

"When women had servants they were being told they were okay. They were often told - 'you've got influence and power because you have got a home to run'. That mechanism wasn't there any more during the war, they had to clean their own homes and started to question their identity.

"Some thought 'if I am going to work and go out and earn money then shouldn't I be able to vote as well? I think women started to see themselves differently in all sorts of ways."

SUFFRAGETTE



HISTORIC: Scenes were filmed in Medway



SUFFRAGETTE follows in the footsteps of movies including *Les Misérables*, *The Golden Compass* and *Sherlock Holmes*, filming scenes at Chatham's Historic Dockyard.

The film is set in the early 20th century, and it centres on members of the WSPU (Women's Social and Political Union) and their campaign to try and get votes for women, exploring their activist movements and run-ins with the government.

It is directed by Sarah Gavron and written by Abi Morgan - who also wrote the script for 2011 film *The Iron Lady*, which charted the life of former prime minister Margaret Thatcher and won Meryl Streep an Oscar for best actress.

The film boasts a star-studded cast, with *The Great Gatsby* actress Carey Mulligan taking on the lead role of a young activist called Maud Watts.

Academy-Award winning actress Meryl Streep will be playing the founder of the WSPU, Emmeline Pankhurst.

Helena Bonham-Carter, who has starred in films including *The King's Speech* and *Sweeney Todd*, will play Edith Ellyn.

Scenes were filmed at the Medway location in February last year.

The dockyard can be seen hosting a keynote rally in which Emmeline Pankhurst makes an impassioned speech about the cause.



SUFFRAGE: The WSPU was formed by Emmeline Pankhurst (right) pictured with her daughter Christabel



VIRUSES: Glass Microbiology is on display at the Chapter House

Artwork places pianos in city

Artist Luke Jerram's Play Me I'm Yours rolls into Canterbury and its own musical mission...

Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

THE tinkling of the ivories will be heard across Canterbury from this weekend as an artist parachutes ten of the instruments into the city centre.

It forms part of the Play Me, I'm Yours artwork which has been touring internationally since 2008.

The brainchild of artist Luke Jerram, more than 1,400 pianos have now been installed in 49 cities across the globe from Paris to Lima.

Each instrument simply bears the invitation Play Me, I'm Yours and invites those musically minded to sit down and play a tune. So far more than six million people have engaged with the instruments worldwide.

Presented by the Lilford Gallery in Canterbury, the pianos have been located around the city, including the train station, Whitefriars shopping centre, Dane John



ART: Glass Microbiology (above) and Play Me I'm Yours (below) are both being presented by the Lilford Gallery

Gardens and inside the clock tower on St George's Street.

Those taking part are encouraged to upload film, photographs and stories of using the pianos on to the artist's website.

A spokesman for the gallery said: "Luke Jerram is one of the most exciting and acclaimed artists working in the world today. He has created a number of extraordinary art projects which have excited and inspired people around the globe."

His practice involves the creation of sculptures, installations and live arts projects."

In addition to the pianos, the gallery is also presenting a display within Canterbury Cathedral of the artist's work.

Housed within the Chapter House, it will showcase the Glass Microbiology exhibition which consists of glass work created from the structures of viruses and one million times their actual size.

Made to contemplate the global impact of each disease they represent, the exhibition is on now and runs until the end of October.

The artist said: "I'm interested to see whether presenting the virus sculptures in the cathedral, effects how the artwork is interpreted."

Both works form part of the Canterbury Festival which starts this weekend and runs until October 31.



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Business calls on Osborne to drive on with crossing

Major industry figures have teamed up to press for firm decision on plan for third Thames crossing...

By Jamie Weir

jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

INFLUENTIAL businesses from across the county are backing a call for chancellor George Osborne to put his foot on the accelerator on plans for a new lower Thames crossing.

The group, which includes Euro-tunnel, the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, Port of Dover, and the Freight Transport Association, is demanding action is taken to set a firm timetable for the new crossing, which has been on the drawing board since being first discussed in 1989.

There are two options on the table – one at Dartford or another east of Gravesend. Either is seen as crucial to easing pressure on the roads which currently cause congestion at both the Dartford Crossing and the Blackwall Tunnel.

A decision is expected in the new year. But now the businesses are calling for the brakes to come off and for

the chancellor to make firm commitments on a timetable and the project's funding in next month's comprehensive spending review, which sets out the government's funding plans for the next five years.

It's a call spearheaded by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (Selep) which argues that the crossing is one of the key infrastructure projects in the south east.

Because of its importance to freight being driven from Europe to the north of Kent, the group say it is of national significance as a key trade route.

George Kieffer, interim chairman of Selep, said it would be key for the north Kent economy to get the project started.

He said: "It's a truly transformational project for the economy of the Thames Estuary, and beyond. When the existing Dartford Crossing is closed or heavily congested there's a knock-on effect that can impact on businesses across the country, including those in the much vaunted northern powerhouse."

Mr Kieffer said that currently, plans were not progressing quickly enough and, more worryingly, still remained 'vague'.

He said: "At the moment, the possible location of a new crossing point are two vague outlines on a map. There's no commitment to funding or delivery, which we need to see to progress our plans for further long-term investment in the area."

Campaigners against a new crossing have said that no decision should be made until the impact of the free-flow system has been fully felt.

Statistics released from Highways England this week (see news pages) seem to indicate that drivers who use the crossing daily save an average of one-and-a-half hours each week as a result of scrapping the booths and using cameras instead to monitor, and charge, those using the crossing.

Gravesham campaigner, Alex Hills, shares the opinion of Gravesham MP Adam Holloway that there should be no decision made while the new fast-tolling system is being bed-

ded in and a full analysis can be made.

Mr Hill, chairman of the Gravesham branch of CPRE Kent, said: "We have no idea just what effect this new fast toll system will have, so I don't think anyone should be pushing for a new crossing without all of the evidence right now. It's far too early to start making decisions on whether we even need a new crossing, let alone where one should be."

However, the businesses backing a new crossing say that doing nothing, or delaying action, will only make things worse. According to them the current crossing at Dartford is already working over its capacity, with projections for it to get worse over the coming years. The group says that increasing the resilience is vital for UK plc.

Jo James, Selep board member and chief executive of Kent Invicta Chamber, said: "The lower Thames crossing is much more than just a new bridge or tunnel to relieve congestion. It represents a once in a genera-

tion opportunity to reinvigorate local development, create new jobs and stimulate investment by supporting nationally important industries.

"It would improve our connectivity to Europe and competitiveness, and at the same time regenerate an overlooked part of southern England."

The lobbying for which of the two options should be chosen has begun in earnest, with Dartford MP Gareth Johnson highlighting the major problems the traffic build-up is having on Dartford itself.

Meanwhile, Adam Holloway, a fellow Tory MP in Mr Johnson's neighbouring constituency, is quick to point out the enormous cost involved of the Gravesham option.

He said: "We need to realise that a new crossing east of Gravesend would cost around £5 billion as well as blighting an area."

What do you think? Share your views and join the debate. Email us at: editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

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Why groups are marching to the borders to revive historic custom

Jamie Weir casts his eye over the ancient tradition of 'beating the bounds' which some say dates back to 254AD, and examines just why it is once again proving popular with groups around the county...

THE idea of going out and walking around an area's boundary, beating sticks at certain parts of the route to drive out evil spirits seems, well, a little strange by modern standards.

But it appears the ancient tradition is making a return as a symbolic gesture undertaken by local councils and community groups.

Earlier this month, Gravesham Borough Council's new mayor, Mick Wenban continued the tradition in his area, taking to the trail alongside 75 other walkers who trekked more than 30 miles around the borough's boundaries. Part social event, part re-tracing historic steps, it thrust the tradition back into the spotlight.

It isn't just district and borough councils which continue the ancient ritual, it has been revived too by the more grass roots tiers of organised community groups such as parish councils and amenity societies.

Graham Rodgers is the chairman of the Westerham Society, civic society for those with a shared interest and concern over the future of the village near Sevenoaks and its surrounding countryside.

The society organises an annual 'beating the bounds' event.

Mr Rodgers told KoS the walk had served a genuine purpose in the past, but was now being resurrected for a different reason.

He said: "Although older, the beating the bounds tradition became extremely popular in the Middle Ages.

"If you lived in a village during those times, your world was unlikely to extend much beyond your parish boundaries, so it was very important to know what your area was, and where neighbouring parishes started.

"It was also an educational event for youths who would have been taught where their village boundaries were. It was a time when there were fewer maps, so it became crucial to pass the knowledge of those boundaries along with these walks."

Quite when the beating the bounds tradition began is unclear, but it is believed to date back to before the Norman Conquest of 1066.

There was a religious element to beating the bounds, with groups of people from the community being led by the parish priest to share knowledge of where the 'bounds' actually lay.

Sometimes these bounds were marked with stones, or poles placed in the ground. The bounds were often literally 'beaten' by those on the walk.

Mr Rodgers said: "The 'beating' comes from the tradition of people who carried willow sticks and would actually beat the stones on the boundary of their parish to drive out evil spirits and the like.

"The tradition was also used to bless the lands to ensure the fields

were fertile and produced good crops. When we go out to beat the bounds, we don't uphold the tradition of taking sticks to actually beat anything.

"However, apparently there are some boundary stands out there, but no-one knows quite where they are. If we are able to track them down, maybe we would think about reintroducing the actual beating of the bounds."

It is thought the genesis of the concept lies in its religious roots - possibly from an ancient custom of processions by the Church which started as early as 254AD.

Those processions, known as gangdags, saw members of the clergy lead residents of an area around the boundaries, singing hymns and carrying large silver crosses for the purpose of asking for God's protection.

That slowly filtered down to parishes who continued the tradition, still asking for help with crops and safety for their area.

Boundary checks slipped slowly down the agenda for many councils across the land though, with the last recorded check in Canterbury taking place in April 1791. Despite that, some still cling to the tradition in the city, albeit on a smaller scale.

One event takes place at the Chaucer Slopes fields on the edge of the city.

Tom Waterman was one of those who joined in with the Canterbury event recently.

He told KoS that although it had slipped from being a purely religious tradition, he felt that religion was still an important element.

He said: "I decided to take part in beating the bounds because it's almost as though you're giving thanks to God for the land around you.

"I think that as areas become more developed, it's particularly important to know where those boundaries are, and also to pay homage to your little corner of the world.

"Obviously we're far more used to travelling miles away from homes for work and leisure these days, but there's something really important about having that understanding of where you live, and a connection to your area. Beating the bounds helps reconnect you."

The Westerham Society chairman also says that his group chose not to make it a religious event, telling KoS that they've decided to make it as inclusive as possible.

He said: "When we decided to start beating the bounds again about five years ago, we chose to do it in May to coincide with the latter part of spring, so that the weather was likely to be decent. We wanted to get as many people out as possible, so we tend to stress the health benefits of going out walking, and have struck up partnerships with other organisations to get as many people



REVIVED: The tradition once saw sticks taken by walkers to strike the boundary borders



SOCIAL: More than 70 joined Gravesham mayor Mick Wenban, above, in beating the bounds

beating the bounds as possible."

That's a similar aim to that of Gravesham mayor Mick Wenban who said he wanted to get as many people out and about as possible.

He told KoS: "We reintroduced it at Gravesham about 20 years ago back in the 1980s when Frank Marven was mayor.

"It's something I wanted to continue when I became mayor as it gets a lot of people out and about in the borough, and also highlights places they

wouldn't normally go. We walk around the whole boundary of Gravesham, so it's quite a distance, but it's great fun and has a real community feel."

The mayor's chosen charities also benefit from the tradition continuing, with many choosing to do it as a sponsored walk to raise funds for them.

Cllr Wenban said: "It's a great way to help raise cash for charity; this year we had over 70 walkers, all out

seeing the bounds of Gravesham which was great fun. We were blessed with great weather this year as well, which was good news as it's never as much fun if it's poor weather.

"I've supported this tradition for some time, doing the walk long before I became mayor so it's something I'm personally quite passionate about.

"Regardless of which political party is in power, it is a wonderful civic tradition, and I hope it continues on for many more years."

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BOYS HALL: On the market for £2.25m

Jacobean manor has rich history

Boys Hall has been home to some of county's most famous families and hosted fleeing king...

Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

A Magnificent 17th century Grade II-listed house rich in Kentish history has gone on the market for £2.25million.

Boys Hall is a Jacobean manor house in Willesborough, near Ashford.

Set in 2.75 acres of private gardens, it is believed to have been built in 1616 by Thomas Boys and his wife Margaret.

The Boys were an important and influential family in Kent's history.

Thomas' brothers being archdeacon at Canterbury Cathedral, who built what is believed to be the first hospital in Kent, and another who was the keeper of Dover Castle.

The family have their own vault in Canterbury Cathedral.

Eventually the estate passed into the Mersham family and then the Knatchbull family.

It is reputed that Charles I stayed at Boys Hall while fleeing to France and Samuel Pepys is also understood to be among its famous visitors.

Within the house are numerous period features including a fine oak principal staircase with nine ornate and prominent newel posts.

kentnews.co.uk kent-life.co.uk



HISTORY: Home to the Boys, the Mershams and Knatchbulls

impressive carved oak door casements and fireplaces.

The excellent accommodation is spread over three floors, including a reception hall, three cloakrooms, drawing room, study, bar/sitting room, dining room and kitchen on the ground floor, as well as a conservatory with covered indoor swimming pool.

On the first floor are six bedroom suites plus a further

bedroom with a private bathroom, and on the second floor is one bedroom suite, two further bedrooms and two bath/shower rooms.

The property also benefits from a three room cellar, including a wine cellar and another compartment with the remnants of a secret passage which, it is understood, once led to Sevington Church.

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MEMORIES: Steve Harley is looking forward to being back on stage with the band

Original cockney rebel will be reuniting with bandmates

Molly Kersey spoke to Steve Harley about their upcoming shows in the county

MUSICIAN Steve Harley will be reuniting with his surviving original Cockney Rebel band members for a 40th anniversary tour, which will see them perform their hits on stages across the UK.

The band, which comprises front-man Mr Harley, Jim Cregan on guitar, Stuart Elliot on drums and Duncan Mackay on keyboards, will be performing together for the first time since 1976.

They shot to fame with hits including Come Up and See Me (Make Me Smile) and Mr Raffles (Man It Was Mean).

And they will be playing at two Kent venues as part of their tour - the Leas Cliff Hall, Folkestone and the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells.

Mr Harley said that he is looking

forward to the reunion.

"The three guys are still my mates. The fun we had back then, when we toured and recorded together, holds fabulous and special memories," he said.

"I take life on the road a lot more seriously now, though, so they'd better be prepared! I'm thrilled to think they'll be up there on the great UK concert hall stages with me once again."

The shows will comprise two sets, and one will be The Best Years of Our Lives album in its entirety.

The shows' opening set will be made up of songs which were chosen through a fan's poll on Mr Harley's website.

"Fans have been urging me to play The Best Years album straight through for some time, and now is the time," he said.

"The momentum built up with

the fans, on my website and Twitter and Facebook.

"I kind of got talked into it, which was fine by me!

"There were about 500 responses to the poll and someone worked out the totals."

And he is looking forward to performing some of the classic songs which have been loved by fans for decades.

"I'm really excited by the prospect of tracks like Back To The Farm getting an airing after so many years.

"I might play a slow, bluesy Make Me Smile, as I presented it to the band originally, as track six, then the full-blown version at the end of the night.

"It's a tough one to follow!" And Mr Harley says that he gets on very well with his fellow performers.

"I wouldn't want to be out there with anyone I didn't like," he said.

"Jim and I have written a few songs together over the years, one of which we are playing in the first set on the tour.

"We wrote a song and tune together called Friend For Life and it's on the new Rod Stewart album, he covered it.

"James left my band in 1976 to join Rod. He's such a great man, a special person. You can't help loving him, he's a fantastic person and a proper friend."

Steve Harley and Cockney Rebel will be performing at the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells, on November 12.

To book call 01892 530613.

The band will then be playing at the Leas Cliff Hall, Folkestone, on November 21.

Call 0844 871 3015 to book.

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INSPIRED WORK

Comedy star David Walliams' Gangsta Granny hits the stage

by Molly Kersey

molly.kersey@archant.co.uk

THE stage production of Gangsta Granny – the children's book written by comedian David Walliams – will be making its way to Dartford.

Gangsta Granny will be taking to the stage at the Orchard Theatre from November 26 to 29.

The show is based on Mr Walliams's successful book, which is illustrated by Tony Ross.

It tells the story of young boy Ben, who hates having to stay with his Granny every Friday when his parents go out, finding their evenings together dull.

However, after making a chance discovery at her house, he finds out that his Granny has something of a secret life.

Ben soon discovers that she is not as 'boring' as he once thought.

Speaking about his inspiration for writing Gangsta Granny, Mr Walliams said: "When I was a child I would spend lots of time with my grandmas.

"Sometimes I would selfishly think spending time with them could be boring but when I got



BRILLIANT: Gangsta Granny will be performed in Dartford.

Credit: Ray Tang/REX Shutterstock.

them on a subject like living in London during World War II when bombs were raining down, they would become very animated and I would be enthralled. I realised everyone has a story to tell.

"It's a huge thrill seeing Gangsta Granny have this whole new life on the stage.

"It has already been a TV film.

"People seem to really like the story," he added.

The book was published by Harper Collins and was a huge success, being shortlisted for both The Red House Children's Book Award and for the Roald Dahl Funny Prize.

Mr Walliams, a judge on popular TV show Britain's Got Talent and the star of comedy TV show Little Britain with Matt Lucas, added: "I am over the moon that Gangsta Granny is coming to the stage.

"It's the most popular of all my books and I am sure this production by the brilliant Birmingham Stage Company will delight not just children but their parents and of course grandparents."

For more information about the show or to book tickets to the performance you can visit www.orchardtheatre.co.uk.

Alternatively call the ticket office on 01322 220000.

Hits of Michael Jackson

TRIBUTE show Jackson Live in Concert will be performed at the Churchill Theatre, Bromley, on October 28 at 7.30pm.

For more details or to book, visit www.atgtickets.com/bromley.



The Unthanks in Margate

MUSICIANS The Unthanks will be performing at the Theatre Royal, Margate, later this month.

They will be performing on October 29 at 7.30pm.

Tickets are £18 or £16 with concessions.

For more details, visit www.theatreroyal-margate.com.

Bullet For My Valentine

METAL band Bullet For My Valentine will be performing at the Leas Cliff Hall, Folkestone on October 18 at 7.30pm.

To book tickets to the show you can visit www.atgtickets.com/folkestone.



Brian Conley up on stage

COMEDIAN Brian Conley will be performing at the Central Theatre, Chatham, next year.

Brian Conley: Alive and Dangerous will be on stage on March 12, 2016.

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For more details about the comedy show or to book tickets, visit www.tickets.medway.gov.uk.

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Christmas party venues

Party the night away in themed venue



PARTY: The purpose-built location is fully themed

COME and enjoy a traditional Christmas extravaganza with your friends and colleagues this Christmas season.

Party the night away in a fully themed, purpose built venue in a convenient location just off the A2 near Canterbury.

There will be welcome drinks and canapes for your party on arrival.

This is followed by a delicious four course traditional Christmas dinner.

Entertainment includes the Monster Christmas Ball nightclub, cabaret and fun casino.

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Established in 2010, Monster Christmas Ball is fast becoming one of the most popular Christmas party venues in east Kent, providing both shared and exclusive party nights for both corporate and individual guests.

Featuring live entertainment, sumptuous dining and a great atmosphere, it is the place to party this Christmas.

So for something new and exciting this Christmas, come and celebrate with them and have a night to remember.

Tickets are available to buy now for parties of any size.

The event is now in its sixth year.

This year the event will be taking place on December 11, 12, 18 and 19.



DINNER: A Christmas Eve dinner and Christmas Day dinner will be served

Reason to celebrate at Bromley Court

JOIN the Bromley Court Hotel this Christmas. Whether it's for a Christmas party for your company or festive lunch for the family they have the option to make it a Christmas to remember.

There are many reasons to celebrate in life, such as birthdays and christenings. Bromley Court welcomes you to come to the hotel for these special occasions and experience them in their luxurious private dining areas.

Their range of nine function rooms are suit-

able for 20 to 180 people, with everything tailored to your individual needs.

A three-course Christmas Eve dinner will be served in the Garden Restaurant, with carols sung by St Mark's Choir.

A Christmas day lunch will also be served there, with a visit from Santa between midday and 2pm. The cost is £85 for adults, with half portions available for children.

For details you can visit www.bromleycourthotel.co.uk.

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BAKED FILLET OF HERB-CRUSTED COD

with tomato and chive fish cream

ROAST RIB OF SCOTCH BEEF

with Yorkshire pudding and red wine jus

WOODLAND MUSHROOM MACARONI

with walnut dressed salad and parmesan shavings

HOMEMADE CHRISTMAS PUDDING with brandy sauce

VANILLA CHEESECAKE with mulled wine berry compote

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with orange and poppy-seed caramel

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Christmas party venues

Victorian venue with a modern twist



PERFECT: The tree-lined venue offers the ideal backdrop for your festive event

CELEBRATE in style this festive season, with all that glitters at Oakwood House Hotel, situated in Maidstone.

Set in tree-lined gardens, this traditional Victorian venue with a modern twist that offers the perfect backdrop for your festive event.

From locally sourced seasonal lunches and their sumptuous Christmas day carvery, to adult and children's parties that pull out all the stops, there is something for everyone at Oakwood House this festive season.

Why not gather family and friends and book one of their more intimate rooms for a relaxing afternoon lunch, buffet or dinner?

If you want something a little different, then

why not try one of their Christmas comedy nights?

They have two first-class acts straight from the London comedy circuit, who will perform their routines while you enjoy a fantastic two course meal followed by a DJ playing all of your favourite party tunes.

Shared party nights are available at Oakwood House throughout December.

You are welcome to bring your friends, colleagues or family along to join them, where all the staff at Oakwood House will ensure that you have a fantastic evening.

For more information about all of the events that are on offer at the hotel you can call 01622 620 720.



UNIQUE: The Quarterhouse will offer an alternative to traditional celebrations

Themed party nights at Quarterhouse

ARE you looking to celebrate Christmas with your colleagues and friends away from the traditional and formal three-course sit down Christmas meal and disco? Then take a look at the four-themed party nights that the Folkestone Quarterhouse has put together for you.

Their Christmas party nights are delivered in their fantastic auditorium and bar, with music and lighting provided by entertainment specialists Apollo Funk.

You can sing and dance to the music that shaped a generation with their 80s and 90s night on December 4 or be taken on a journey through rock 'n' roll history with their 60s and 70s night on December 5.

You can party from the noughties through to the present day on December 11 or shake off the winter blues at the Caribbean club party on December 12.

For details, visit www.quarterhouse.co.uk.

Christmas & New Year 2016 Oakwood House



*Celebrate Christmas in style this year
at Oakwood House....*

*A selection of shared and
private parties available*

If you wish to host a private event this festive season we have a number of dates available for you to party the night away. Book the room with private bar and the DJ along with our delicious 3 course Christmas meal



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Folkestone Quarterhouse

Are you looking to celebrate Christmas with your colleagues and friends away from the traditional and formal 3 course sit down Christmas meal and disco?

Then take a look at the four themed party nights Quarterhouse has put together for you!

80'S & 90'S DISCO PARTY NIGHT

Friday 4 December
7pm - 12.30am

Fork Food by Follies, 7pm - 8.30pm

Boeuf Bourguignon with pilaff rice

or

Mushroom Chasseur with pilaff rice (v)

Apollo Funk Entertainment DJ, 8pm - 12pm

Sing and dance to the music that shaped a whole generation, nostalgia guaranteed!

Dressing up for the era optional -

Prize for Best Dressed on the night!

Full Cash Bar open throughout the evening!

NOUGHTIES TO NOW PARTY NIGHT

Friday 11 December
7pm - 12.30am

Fork Food by Follies, 7pm - 8.30pm

Chicken & apricot tagine served

with minted cous cous

or

Aubergine & sweet potato tagine served

with minted cous cous (v)

Apollo Funk Entertainment DJ, 8pm - 12pm

Current, fresh, music from the Millennium to Now!

Dress code, Go Glam!

Prize for Best Dancer on the night!

Full Cash Bar open throughout the evening!

Christmas Party Offer 2015

Early Bird Ticket Price:
£15 per person until 31 October 2015
After that £18 per person

Available at:

Quarterhouse Box Office 01303 760 750
and at www.quarterhouse.co.uk

Quarterhouse, Mill Bay Folkestone CT20 1BN

60'S & 70'S RETRO PARTY NIGHT

Saturday 5 December
7pm - 12.30am

Fork Food by Follies, 7pm - 8.30pm

Hawaiian pineapple chicken

or

Mushroom, spinach pilau with fried onions (v)

Apollo Funk Entertainment DJ, 8pm - 12pm

Let's take you on journey from Rock N Roll to Motown with music and dance from these extraordinary decades.

Dressing up for the era optional -

Prize for Best Dressed on the night!

Full Cash Bar open throughout the evening!

CARIBBEAN CLUB PARTY NIGHT

Saturday 12 December
7pm - 12.30am

Fork Food by Follies, 7pm - 8.30pm

Jamaican jerk chicken wings with rice & peas

or

Sweet potato, Callaloo coconut curry

with rice & peas (v)

Apollo Funk Entertainment DJ, 8pm - 12pm

What winter blues? With Soca, Reggae & Salsa bringing the sunshine in to December, we're feeling Hot Hot Hot!

Dressing up optional

Prize for Best Dressed on the night!

Full Cash Bar open throughout the evening!



www.quarterhouse.co.uk

Christmas party venues

A fun Las Vegas-themed extravaganza

VIVA Las Priestfield, Gillingham, will welcome thousands of guests to celebrate Christmas with family, friends and work colleagues in the most glamorous festive way.

Guests at Priestfield's Great Hall will be transported to Las Vegas with a themed extravaganza planned to entertain guests.

Gillingham Football Club's director of events and facilities, Steve Ware, believes Viva Las Priestfield could be the biggest and best Christmas the club has hosted. Guests will enjoy a three course fine dining experience, all inclusive drinks, a cabaret show between courses, light show, close up magic, casino tables, photo booths and much more.

For groups looking for a way to celebrate Christmas in style, this night is tailored to suit and for smaller groups as part of a joiner-type party, or whole companies wishing to private hire the facilities up to 500 people.

For more information you can visit www.priestfield.com.



ENTERTAINMENT: There will be casino tables for guests

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Tale of Baby and Johnny

MUSICAL Dirty Dancing will be performed at the Orchard Theatre, Dartford, from September 1 to 3, 2016.

To book, visit www.orchardtheatre.co.uk or call the ticket office on 01322 220000.



Circus mayhem in town

SHOW Circus Mayhem will be performed at the Folkestone Quarterhouse later this month.

The show, presented by Crying Out Loud, will be running from October 30 to 31.

The performance will start at 7pm.

For more details or to book, visit www.quarterhouse.co.uk.

Story of a snow maiden

BALLET company The Russian State Ballet of Siberia will be performing The Snow Maiden at the Churchill Theatre, Bromley, on January 13.

Visit www.atgtickets.com/bromley to book.



Fielding due is in Margate

COMEDIAN Noel Fielding will be on stage at the Margate Winter Gardens later this year.

An Evening With Noel Fielding will be performed on December 9.

The show will be starting at 8pm and tickets are £25. To book, visit www.margatewintergardens.co.uk

Festival with a focus on the sea is in Folkestone

By Molly Kersey

molly.kersey@archant.co.uk

A NEW festival which focuses on the sea and the environment will be in Folkestone later this month.

The SALT festival will include a series of talks, walks, workshops, installations, theatre shows, and exhibitions – with the aim being to explore the coastal environment.

The festival has been co-curated by Folkestone Quarterhouse, Folkestone Fringe and Karen Shepherdson of Canterbury Christ Church University.

It will be running for four days from October 21 to 24 – with the launch taking place at Folkestone Library.

A number of locations across Folkestone will be included in the festival such as the Folkestone Quarterhouse, Sunflower House and Harbour Arm.

A spokesman from the Creative Foundation said: "These locations not only act as venues but also bring together the different communities and varying environments that are at the core of Folkestone's coastal heritage."

On October 23, Smoking Apples



will be bringing their show In Our Hands, which combines puppetry and visual theatre, to the Folkestone Quarterhouse.

In Our Hands tells the story of Alf, a trawler fisherman whose experience and loyalty has placed him at the top of his game.

However, times are changing and so are the regulations that surround the industry.

Will Alf be able to adapt in order to ensure his survival?

The performance will be taking place at 7.30pm.

Family show Sea Story weaves together 100 stories written specially by young people across Kent and features storms, shipwrecks, mermaids, jellyfish and a variety of sea creatures.

It will be performed on October 24 at 11am and 2.30pm.

Passionate outdoor swimmer Susie Parr will also be exploring the world of outdoor swimming on October 24 at 11am, followed by a group swim from Sunny Sands.

For details about SALT festival visit www.quarterhouse.co.uk.



SWIMMER: Susie Parr will examine wild swimming



VARIETY: Sea Story combines 100 stories written by children

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BUCKMORE PARK

Guide to making the perfect Christmas pudding

Kate Whiting enrolled on a masterclass to find out how to make the perfect traditional pudding...

NO matter how many pigs in blankets you've scoffed on Christmas Day, you can always make room for some pudding, can't you?

In recent years, shops have battled to outdo one another to produce the most tempting Christmas pud - and it might seem easier to pop one in your shopping basket than to make your own. But old traditions die hard, and in the next few months, the scent of spice and sugar will be wafting around the nation's kitchens, as we get cooking our own.

Being a novice when it comes to festive fayre, I thought it was time I enrolled on a Christmas pudding masterclass at The Landmark Lon-

don, Marylebone.

"The traditional time to make Christmas pudding is the 5th Sunday before Christmas - Stir-up Sunday - but you can make them any time," says pastry chef, Pierre Rebutzi.

On Stir-up Sunday, traditionally, each member of the family would have a turn stirring the 'plum pudding' (plums were another word for raisins pre-Victorian times) and make a wish.

For many years, Mr Rebutzi, who hails from Lyon, has made around 500 Christmas puddings to serve at the hotel. It does seem a little strange to be taught how to make such a traditionally English dish by a Frenchman, but it turns out that Mr Rebutzi has a unique take on the old classic.



PUDDING: The scent of spice and sugar will waft through kitchens

"As a French person, Christmas pudding is not something I traditionally eat, but the way I like my Christmas pudding is light and fruity," says the 30-year-old, who has been macerating his fruit for six weeks in a mix of rum, brandy, kirsch and lemon and orange juice.

"I don't like it too hard or too flavourful of spices - I like something very light, because it's something you will eat after a big meal and you will not have much space!"

Rebutzi uses just one spice - nutmeg - to flavour his pudding, although cinnamon, cloves and ginger are traditionally used too.

The Christmas pudding is quite quick and easy to make - but there are 22 different ingredients in Mr Rebut-

zi's version, which have been 'prepared earlier', including fruit that's been steeping for weeks. All I need to do is mix them up in the bowl, and grate the Granny Smith apple in too.

Once mixed, you squash the squishy mess into your pudding basin, cover with a layer of greaseproof paper and then another of aluminium foil, all tied up with string. The time-consuming part is to steam the pud for four hours in a big saucepan, making sure you keep the water topped up throughout.

To ensure that boozy flavour, Mr Rebutzi suggests: "Every so often, maybe once a week, you can add a little bit more alcohol, like brandy, on top, and it will still keep a lot of flavour."

Strictly stars on stage

TWO stars of popular BBC show Strictly Come Dancing will be performing at the Woodville, Gravesend.

Ian Waite and Natalie Lowe will be coming to town on April 20, 2016.

They will be showcasing a mixture of ballroom and Latin dancing.

For tickets to An Audience With Ian Waite and Natalie Lowe, you can visit www.woodville.co.uk.

Comedian in Dartford

COMEDIAN Jimeoin will be performing live on stage in Dartford next month.

The Irish comedian, who has starred in TV shows including Live at the Apollo and Sunday Night at the Palladium, will be performing at the Orchard Theatre on November 12 at 8pm.

For more details or to book, visit www.orchardtheatre.co.uk.

Paul Potts to perform

WINNER of the first season of Britain's Got Talent, Paul Potts, will be performing in Bromley later this month.

Mr Potts has found global success since the talent show win.

He will be performing at the Churchill Theatre on October 26.

The performance starts at 7.30pm.

To book tickets to the show you can visit www.atgtickets.com/bromley.

Maidstone's footloose

MUSICAL Footloose will be performed at the Hazlitt Theatre, Maidstone, later this month.

The show will be running from October 29 to 31 and performances will be taking place at 7.30pm.

Tickets range from £10 and concessions are available.

For more information or to book tickets, visit www.parkwoodtheatres.co.uk.

6-8 NOVEMBER

Crafts for Christmas

The Kent Pavilions, Kent County Showground, Detling, Maidstone, ME14 3JF.

Opening: Friday & Saturday 9.00am - 5.00pm Sunday 9.00am - 4.00pm

An opportunity to meet Britain's most talented makers, purchase inspirational gifts and festive foods. Dan Kennedy from the Kent Cookery School, UK Seafood Champion and experienced Michelin star chef, will be demonstrating canapes and finger foods throughout the show.

HOTLINE 01428 684494

At the event: Adults: £7.00 Seniors: £6.00 In advance: Adults: £6.00 Seniors: £5.00 (subject to 50p transaction fee) rca.ruralcraftsassociation.co.uk

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Driving on the edge of America

TRAVEL REVIEW: America

by Warren Christmas

“WOAH, that was close,” says my co-driver Emma – well, unrepeatable words to that effect – as our hire car apparently gets within a few inches of the edge of the Pacific Coast Highway, at least 200ft above the ocean.

I say ‘apparently’ because I’m sunk behind the steering wheel of a very unfamiliar sports car – a bright red, growling Ford Mustang V6 Fastback – and, to be honest, I’m pretty much guessing what’s happening way over there on the right-hand side.

Despite holding a driving licence for more than a quarter of a century, and visiting a fair chunk of the world in that time, I’ve somehow avoided driving on the ‘wrong’ side of the road. Until today, that is.

Some friends had expressed surprise that I was planning a six-day trip to travel from San Francisco to L.A. It’s true that you can do it in seven hours if you take the direct, 381-mile route on Interstate 5. But that’s just a car journey – what I’m planning is a road trip. Better still, I’m doing it in style by driving a series of highly desirable cars.

Driving along California Route 1 heading towards the Big Sur, the scenery becomes prettier and more distracting, which probably explains that close brush with the edge of the road. We stop, along with many other tourists, at the well-known landmark Bixby Creek Bridge, a concrete-arched construction set 280ft above the ocean, which I vaguely recognise from photos.

A few miles down the road, it becomes apparent that we’d actually stopped at its little brother, Rocky



BEAUTIFUL: Six day trips from San Francisco to L.A. are available

Creek Bridge.

One of the advantages of a fly-drive holiday is that you can pick and choose accommodation to suit your budget and requirements. That could mean medium-price hotels or low-cost rooms for most of the trip, with a treat for a night or two. For most of us, the Ventana Inn & Spa, set in the lush hills in the heart of the Big Sur, would definitely fall into the latter category. Our room costs around 850 US dollars (£544) for a single night - and

that’s a mid-range option at the Ventana, at a midweek rate.

As beautiful as the Ventana resort is, I can’t wait to continue my journey. I’d arranged to switch vehicle to a Jeep Grand Cherokee, and from the SUV’s elevated driving position, I can literally see more of the coast - and, indeed, the edge of the road.

The infamous Highway 1 twists and turns along a path carved by nature over millions of years, with just a little help from men armed with

dynamite.

It’s a well-kept road, with a crash barrier along the perimeter. Crucially, drivers respect the 45mph speed limit and the double yellow lines down the centre of the road, which indicate no overtaking. This is a tourist route. Anyone in a rush uses Route 101 or Interstate 5, inland.

There are many places to pull over to admire the scenery on Highway 1 - and you should, regularly.

Back on the road, my heart sinks a

TRAVEL FACTS

Warren Christmas was a guest of Virgin Holidays who offers a five-night West Coast fly-drive from £1,425 per person based on two sharing.

This includes scheduled flights from London Heathrow to San Francisco and returning via Los Angeles with room-only accommodation and car hire for a convertible.

For more information visit www.virginholidays.co.uk.

little when I see a build up of homes - and, soon after, traffic lights - as I approach San Luis Obispo. The beautiful, sparsely populated Big Sur had been and gone in a flash.

Still, the affluent city, known locally as ‘SLO’, offers its own random delights - specifically, dinner at the gob-smackingly kitsch Madonna Inn, and truly exhilarating sand buggy racing on the massive dunes at the nearby Pismo Beach.

For the next leg, purely in the name of research, I switch vehicle again - this time to a jet black Chevrolet Camaro, another gas-guzzling 3.7-litre sports coupe. At least the petrol is cheap here - less than 60p/litre if my calculations are correct.

At the risk of shattering some illusions, I find it annoying driving with the top down on the freeway. It’s noisy and breezy, but I’m also aware that I’m cooking in the harsh Californian sun - and from one side only.

Any inconvenience is forgotten when I cruise into the beautiful seaside city of Santa Barbara, feeling a little like a movie star. California is one big natural playground. It’s a place to create your own excellent adventure. Just don’t get too close to the edge.

Film Reviews by Damon Smith



HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA 2
(U, 89 mins) Animation/Comedy/Drama/Romance

If the Twilight film series taught us anything it’s that forbidden desire always ends in copious blood-letting and tears. And if a love child of this union comes mewling into

the world, a sequel beckons.

Genndy Tartakovsky’s computer-animated family comedy obliges by considering the thorny parenting issues for a slacker dude and his fanged bride, who can’t decide if they should raise their first child among monsters or mortals.

The great and the good of the monster world gather at Hotel Transylvania for the wedding of vampire Mavis and her mortal beau Jonathan.

Mavis later gives birth to a son called Dennis and the couple consider moving to California to raise their child among humans. Dracula is devastated - he believes that any heir to the bloodline should be raised in Transylvania.

So he takes Dennis on a journey to all of his favourite haunts, aided by good friends such as Frankenstein’s monster and Wayne Werewolf. As Dennis’ fifth birthday approaches, Dracula waits for the

boy’s first milk fang to sprout - proof he has vampire blood coursing through his veins.

PAN
(PG, 111 mins) Family/Adventure/Fantasy

PAN opens with a mother tearfully abandoning her infant on the steps of The Sisters Of Eternal Prudence, Lambeth Home For Boys with a handwritten note and a pan flute pendant. As bombs rain down on 1940s London 12 years later, the child - Peter - and best friend Nibs declare a war of attrition against head nun, Mother Barnabas, who is forcing the boys to eat gruel.

One fateful night, pirates abseil through the home’s skylights, kidnap the children and spirit them away to Neverland, where they become the property of ageing seadog Blackbeard. The abducted tykes are put to work in the mines



where Peter befriends rascal Hook and learns he might be the chosen one of ancient prophecy.

SUPERBOB
(15, 80 mins) Fantasy

Postman Bob Kenner pounds the beat in Peckham and is hit by a falling meteorite during one of his rounds. This strange occurrence

blesses Bob with superhuman powers and he decides to use his new-found abilities for the benefit of his fellow London citizens. Seven years later, Bob has graduated to a position in the Ministry of Defence as a civil servant. He pines for librarian June and decides that the time has come to face the greatest challenge of all: winning June’s heart.

THE first frosts have already arrived in parts of the UK, which is your sign to get tender plants under cover before they succumb to the ravages of winter.

Check your greenhouse heater's working, that automatic vent openers are still operating, and clear fully harvested cucumbers, peppers, aubergine and chilli plants.

As the weather turns cooler, close up the greenhouse in the early afternoon to trap heat, which will help to ripen indoor fruit. Keep dampness to a minimum and ventilate when possible to move air around the plants and keep them healthy.

If you have permanent fruit growing in your greenhouse borders, work in organic matter such as compost or well-rotted manure around them.

Bring in tender plants including cannas and bananas in pots, before the frost damages the leaves, as well as shrubs including azaleas, camelias and daphnes for early spring flowers.

There's still time to sow Californian poppy, pansies, cornflowers and sweet peas, and plant bulbs for spring colour. Linda Lane, managing director of family firm Griffin Glasshouses, says key tasks should focus on letting in light, eliminating disease and controlling bugs and pests.

Autumn is a great time to have a good clear-out as you will get rid of pests which might otherwise overwinter in the warmer environment.

"It is essential to keep glasshouses



WINTER: There are steps you can take to protect plants from the changing seasons

Greenhouses ready for winter

clean and healthy," she says.

"They should not be used to store garden tools, pots, old plant labels and seed boxes as they can harbour pests and diseases.

"Make sure the glass on both the inside and out is regularly cleaned to maximise the short daylight and sunshine hours we have in the winter."

Use a proprietary glass cleaner if

the panes are particularly dirty, otherwise just plain water, making sure it doesn't drop on to the leaves of the plants.

She advises against using a pressure washer unless it's a warm day when plants can be taken outside.

"Keep pathways and staging clean and, if necessary, wash over with a non-toxic disinfectant. Repair broken

glass because draughts can cause immediate damage in cold weather."

Where panes overlap, use an old lolly stick or plant label to ease out the dirt, then give the area a gentle slosh with water to remove it completely.

Use a scrubbing brush to wash down shelves and staging, making sure you do the underside as well as the top. It may be too late in the sea-

son to repaint or treat wooden greenhouses, but all metal supports should be washed down, inside and out, again ensuring no spillage onto the plants.

You may need to put up insulation to ensure overnight temperatures are kept as high as possible inside the greenhouse, saving money on heating bills.

mnda
motor neurone disease
association

MND Association volunteering

The MND Association is supported by more than 3,000 volunteers across a range of different roles. Volunteers play an important part in helping us to ensure that people with MND and their families receive the support and services they need.



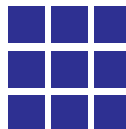
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We have volunteering opportunities to suit a range of different skill sets and time commitments.

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PFI has dealt NHS a big blow

I VERY much agree with your correspondent Dr Hobday (KoS, last week) that the NHS should remain a public service and be properly resourced. However, the two most important reasons for its financial problems are often overlooked.

It was the programme of PFI schemes, introduced by the Labour government which saddled hospitals with ongoing debts, which will take decades to pay off and which merely enrich private companies.

In addition, the excessive number of overpaid bureaucrats in the NHS is a drain on limited resources.

For the NHS to survive these two scandals must be addressed, even if it means repudiating agreements made with parasitical companies and dismissing useless managers.

Colin Bullen,
Tonbridge

Gay lobby has martyred Turing

IT WAS quite right that John Gamet in last week's leader letter suggesting that the ongoing debate(?) between Ray 'St Duff' and Ian Taylor should conclude by 'burying the hatchet' as neither one would see eye to eye – no matter what.

Also, it had taken up valuable space for other correspondents with fresh opinions to air. Nevertheless. What has been good for the reader is the exchange of opinions.

Two of the things mentioned were the 'undeniable facts' which haven't been proved – such as global warming which has now morphed in to climate change and now into global cooling, which altogether, St 'Duff' has propounded for some time to be an undeniable fact.

Another 'fact' was his assertion that Alan Turing broke the German Enigma code. The Enigma code was originally broken in the early 1930s by a team of Polish cryptographers led by a man named Marian Rejewski who – like Turing – was a mathematician. In 1939 when the Germans invaded Poland, the team transferred their information to the Allies.

The groundwork for the Ultra codebreakers at Bletchley Park was then laid by the Poles.

Unfortunately, the work of Alan Turing has been seized by the gay lobby, who see Turing as some kind of martyr and used to promote their own agenda. The result is a grave injustice to the true breakers of the code.

Harry Williams,
Hythe

LETTER OF THE WEEK



Lobby now to save our NHS, say doctors

AS SENIOR doctors who have worked in Kent for many years, we write to express our grave concern about the government's intention to impose a damaging and dangerous working contract on our junior colleagues.

So-called "junior" doctors make up all doctors from every speciality in hospitals except consultants, and are the backbone of medical care. Without them there would be no expert healthcare for patients and the service would be paralysed.

Sadly, government ministers do not seem to recognise this.

If they did, they would not be trying to force on these dedicated doctors "normal" working hours of 7am-10pm six days a week with the added insult of a 30 per cent pay cut.

In the same shameful package, juniors entering general practice could earn up to 40 per cent less. This is not only unjust but idiotic in view of the lack of GPs. Safeguards against working dangerous hours are to be removed and maternity pay affected.

We were told bankers needed their high pay and bonuses to stop them leaving the country. Too many junior doctors are already leaving the UK because of government policies towards the NHS and this contract will accelerate the exodus. Double standards indeed.

We support junior doctors fully in their fight to retain safe working conditions. Tired doctors make mistakes. Patients and the NHS will undoubtedly be put at risk by these cynical proposals.

Dr P Hobday, Dr K Potterton, Dr A Abbas, Dr K Bala, Dr J Goodman, Dr R Hart, Dr D Tod, Dr C Jones, Dr A Soorma, Dr A Saha, Dr S Renkema, Dr R Blundell, Dr M Little, Dr M Ironmonger, Dr J Dennison, Dr P Hanrath, Dr G Singh, Dr S Jones, Dr P Gildeh, Dr P Jones, Dr T Cantor, Dr M South, Dr M Heber, Dr G Hagan, Dr H Terrell, Dr A Jones, Dr M Moss, Dr N Pile

Look who's back again folks...!

IN FINAL reply to Ian Taylor (KoS, letters), it is certainly true I always try to provide relevant, and thus checkable by readers, sources for my assertions; but all he can come up with are vague assertions; such as "exaggerated health and fuel tests etc"; with no sources given. Hence such can be said to be mere assumptions rather than actual facts.

On diesel cars, the Emissions Analytics group and their on-the-

road testing programme, has just shown that from 200 recent 'real world' tests on Euro 5 and 6 diesel engines, from about 15 different cars makers, only five matched current emissions regulations. All others were on average four times over the legal limits.

These emissions have been linked to making people more vulnerable to health problems and premature deaths; including by Prof Frank Kelly at Kings College, London in 2014. So MEPs have for years been trying to reform EU rules and there are more stringent proposals, but, as the Lib Dems'

Catherine Bearder pointed out "the powerful car lobby and national governments have fiercely resisted these life-saving changes".

As for the rest, no sources for his assertion of more scientists being opposed to man-made climate change and as far as gay rights, I support civil partnerships for straights but also call for gays to be able to be married in church.

Ray Duff,
Folkestone

Don't set Corgis on to Corbyn

I'M ALWAYS amused by the "funnies" that sometimes pop up on your excellent letters' page, and try to form a mental picture of their authors from the usually irrelevant issues that make them seemingly apoplectic.

"Corbyn? Set the corgis on him!" by WE Lane of Strood (KoS, last week) is such an example.

Our national anthem itself is, of course, a pointless and now totally meaningless dirge. It originated as a Drury Lane theatre song, to be sung by sycophantic supporters of a Hanoverian king, to very publicly show their allegiance in the face of an armed insurrection.

To his credit, Jeremy Corbyn stood in respectful silence. As I always do, when the rare occasion warrants. What's wrong with that? Should I have the royal pets bite my ankles too?

As for his personal views on the Falklands; they are not, and never will be, Labour policy, in or out of government. It is deliberately misleading to claim otherwise.

As for Mr Lane saying he and his family would never vote for Labour – did they ever? No, of course not.

In Jeremy Corbyn we have a well-grounded and honest, democratically elected, Labour leader who will genuinely fight hard and long for fairness, equality and justice for the majority ordinary people of Britain.

John Dutton,
Tunbridge Wells

Oh dear, oh deer, oh dear

I READ your very interesting article regarding education and the academy argument (KoS, last week).

I then turned the page to read an article on the subject of 'wild deer' on our roads.

I suspect that the education system has failed this journalist.

John Spooner,
via email

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

- 1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
- 2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
- 3) Be written in clear, concise English.

- 4) Not be overly sensational.
- 5) Have a sense of humour.
- 6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
- 7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
- 8) Highlight topical issues of concern to

people living in the county.

9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.

10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

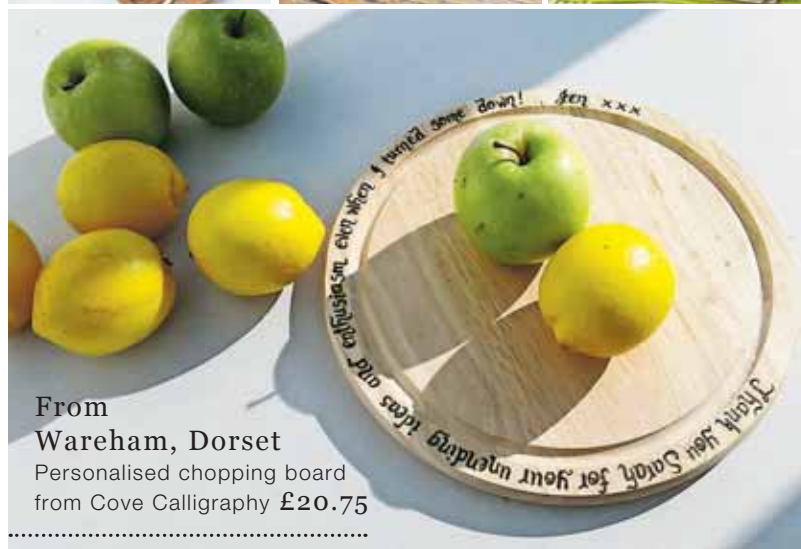
We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.



October cobwebs by **Tim Lavender,** **Tonbridge**

To see your photograph printed, email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk, or post it to **Archant KOS Media, Images of Kent, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford, TN23 1PP**. Be sure to include your name, address and a contact telephone number. Unfortunately we cannot return any prints, and please do not send negatives. Note: all digital images must be no less than 200dpi. Please note, our relationship with MyFerryLink has now come to an end. We thank them for their long support.

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Women Seeking

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mydate24

MARION, early 70s, young at heart, GSOH, active, likes walking, gardening, meals out, travel, theatre and animals, looking for male friendship to share interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419657

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+. Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 4290 Box 419673

PAT, 68, young at heart, slim, proud 4' 11" GSOH, N/S, likes walking etc. Whistable area, seeks similar slim easy going male 60-70. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419081

DISCREET man wanted by married lady for no strings fun. I'm called Sarah and am 37yrs. Pls call. ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 4298 Box 418167

CHANTELLE, 5ft3 light brown/blonde hair, blue eyes, likes nights in/out, walks, animals, romance seeks honest guy. Littlehampton. Text only to Mailbox no: 4923883

CHRISTINA, curvy beauty, 27yrs, own home, very very adventurous seeks no strings fun and frolics. Tel No: 0906 515 4289 Box 410127

MARIE, very lonely middle-aged woman, looking for a kind hearted older man, late 70s/early 80s for friendship/companionship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418955

MAUREEN, discreet sensual lady, 42yrs seeks daytime fun at her home. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 4274 Box: 405297

RACHEL late 40s, blonde, blue eyes and very voluptuous. Looking for a kind, caring honest man. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418741

ATTRACTIVE solvent business woman, 36yrs, seeks discreet gent 25+ for no strings discreet fun. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 4692 Box 419701

ESSEX lady, mid 60's, adaptable, seeking nice male, likes most things. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418537

CHLOE, pretty brunette, 30yrs good job but lacking male with a naughty side, is that you, age unimportant. Text only to Mailbox no: 4057558

AMANDA, 36, tall, slim, busy brunette seeks man, any age, any area, for discreet daytime fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418117

MELANIE, tanned, toned, young 41yrs divorcee with own flat, working, solvent, just missing a chap. Text only to Mailbox no: 4112160

HELEN, widow 58, medium build, 5ft 4ins, blonde, GSOH, likes a chat, days out, looking to start again with someone of similar age. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 376243

FEMALE, 59, GSOH, many interests, seeks caring male for fun friendship maybe more, genuine calls only. Text only to Mailbox No: 481973

GORGEOUS flower, Ashford Kent, 51, larger lady, large personality, easy going, seeks male who likes dogs, animals for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417435

FEMALE easy going, kind, loving, genuine, romantic, car boots, gardening, seeking male with GSOH. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417603

SUSIE fit, friendly, looking for someone to love and look after me, preferably older, N/S male with own car. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 392537

HAPPY young looking lady, 62, likes socialising, conversation, seeking nice man to share good times with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407383

KATIE, 5ft 5, slim dark hair, very attractive female, likes most things in life and a good laugh, looking for a similar male. Text only to Mailbox No: 4722127

NICE female looking for decent genuine male for friendship to start out with. Text only to Mailbox No: 4710874

BLONDE female, 5ft 1ins, size 12, likes meals out, drinks, nights in, walks, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409025

JAN 63, young at heart, petite, 5ft 2ins, brown hair, blue eyes, GSOH, likes cooking, countryside, travel, days out, seeks easy going male, 60-70. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416349

ATTRACTIVE lady early 50's, petite, Scandinavian blonde professional, WLTW professional, caring gent, 50-60's for attention and future together. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416559

RACHEL attractive, blue eyes, blonde, voluptuous, seeking kind, honest, generous kind male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418403

JAN 63, young at heart, petite, 5ft 2ins, brown hair, blue eyes, GSOH, likes cooking, countryside, travel, days out, seeks easy going male, 60-70. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416349

ALISON 39, petite with long brown hair, hazel eyes, very loving, seeking similar male for an uncomplicated relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416517

ALISON 30, pretty, slim with long brown hair, fit and active seeks fit older male for energetic relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416497

DEBORAH 41, intelligent brunette, lovely brown eyes, discreet, many interests, seeks similar male to share fun and good conversation. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416515

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

ATTRACTIVE black, athletic lady, varied interests, seeks similar white, old fashioned, genuine male for relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416215

MAY sexy black African female, 38, hardworking, seeks generous friendly male for mutual rewarding friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416211

SUE young at heart, good looking, enjoy life, socialising, beach walks, gardening, theatre, seeking male, 55-65 to share life with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416171

JACKIE 32, attractive professional, very smart and feminine, long brown hair, seeks smart, confident, older male who knows how to treat a lady. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416297

BECKY 23, classy blonde, long blonde hair, blue eyes seeks loving older guy to spoil and pamper her. Discretion assured/guaranteed. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416233

LINDA 26, cheeky, curvy brunette, a little shy at first, likes to look after herself, seeks dark haired male for discreet naughty but fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416195

TERESA 39, petite, cuddly and bubbly seeks kind older male to travel, have fun, and take care of, pamper and flirt with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416081

LUCY stunning tall brunette, looking for exciting times, seeks like-minded, adventurous male who is willing to try anything once or maybe even twice! Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416079

BLONDE female, 47, looking for fun, sensual, experienced, understanding, seeking similar. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415675

SINGLE young lady, slim-medium build, 24-38 sought by mature male in Canterbury. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405697

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

MALE 47, builder, seeks lady for companionship and closeness, age and looks unimportant. Text only to Mailbox no: 4924811

DAVID, 39yrs, divorced with no ties, lovely flat in Spain, seeks travel companion, single mums welcome. Text only to Mailbox no: 4112425

MATTHEW, five foot eleven, looking for a mature lady for discreet friendship and a few laughs. Dartford area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419469

45 year old male, looking for a happy intelligent friendly female for company and evenings in or out, looks or race unimportant. Text only to Mailbox no: 5063649

JOHN, 47, six foot two, well-built, handsome, non-smoker, intelligent and funny, doesn't take himself too seriously, easy to get along with, seeks attractive female, any age, for discreet, adventurous, any time fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419461

NICE looking genuine man would like to meet nice lady any age for company, outings with GSOH. Text only to Mailbox no: 4922399

ANDREW, 63, likes animals, walking, boot fairs, shopping, looking for someone similar living in the Maidstone/Kent area, for possible LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419203

MALE 56, likes good conversation, seeks older lady for discreet friendly fun, 50 plus. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419201

PETITE blonde, blue eyes, very feminine and sensual seeks younger male for friendship and discreet fun. Can accommodate. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416077

SARAH 29yr old pretty slim single mum of one, interesting, lively, good fun, enjoys nights in/out, music, seeking similar easy going, genuine, honest man/dad to get to know. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415841

ANGIE attractive nurse 39yrs, new to area/advertising, likes dog walking, being sociable, meals in/out, WLTW honest, fun male for possible ltr. looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415827

LISA attractive petite Filipino female, very lonely, wanting to find love, companionship and to be happy, looking for friendship and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415549

SUE 65, 5ft 8ins, blonde hair, fashionable, smoker, GSOH, enjoys meals out, travel, animals, WLTW kind, shyish man for friendship, maybe more. Thanet area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415735

49YR old male, 6ft, well built, seeks female to wine/dine and have fun with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 390929

48YR old divorced male, 6ft, well built, seeks lady for fun and laughter. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380789

BARRY 47, 6ft, well built, seeks female for winning, dining and fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 361787

VINCENT 49, 6ft, well built, seeks lady for fun nights in and out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 373797

HAPPY go lucky divorced man, 48, 6ft, well built, seeks gorgeous female to share love and laughs with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383719

GARY 48, 6ft, well-built, dark hair, brown eyes, seeks passionate female for fun times in and out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 387175

BARRY 49, 6ft, well built, kind, affectionate, loving, seeks special lady for good times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 393855

MALE 70's, fit, looking for lady to share life with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416663

HARRY 50, ex soldier, 6ft, well built, seeking lady to wine and dine. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417015

MALE 57, seeking honest, reliable, genuine lady for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418535

69YR old male, professional, 5ft 10ins, fit, medium build, young outlook, reliable, sincere, likes most things, seeks slim, slender, uncomplicated lady. Kent/Surrey. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418531

RICHARD 63, N/S, clean-shaven, likes meals out, days out, classic cars, seeking female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418517

JONATHAN good looking, considerate, long curly hair, N/S, seeks tall, slim female, 30-45. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418451

SIMON, 50, actor, loves music, films, reading, ambiguity, Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia, WLTW a pretty leggy female, 35 years plus for friendship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418827

MALE 57, seeking honest, reliable, genuine lady for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418535

50YR old divorced white male, passionate, strong, seeking caring lady for romantic, loving relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418641

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49YR old male, 6ft, well built, seeks female to wine/dine and have fun with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 390929

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VINCENT 49, 6ft, well built, seeks lady for fun nights in and out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 373797

HAPPY go lucky divorced man, 48, 6ft, well built, seeks gorgeous female to share love and laughs with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383719

GARY 48, 6ft, well-built, dark hair, brown eyes, seeks passionate female for fun times in and out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 387175

BARRY 49, 6ft, well built, kind, affectionate, loving, seeks special lady for good times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 393855

MALE 70's, fit, looking for lady to share life with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416663

HARRY 50, ex soldier, 6ft, well built, seeking lady to wine and dine. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417015

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PAUL 52, seeks loving female for exciting times, meals out, weekends away, cosy nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418077

MALE widower, N/S, seeks buxom lady, 50-70, likes reading, 60's music, pub quizzes and crosswords. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417905

BRIAN 71, likes meals out, drinks, nights in, music, walks, seeks female with similar interests. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417697

PROFESSIONAL, romantic male, 44, likes meals out, cinema, music, holidays, seeks female, 30-55 for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 250195

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BI male 57 slim GSOH seeks local guy for fun and friendship. Text only to Mailbox No: 4751943

JESSICA, 53 yrs old, feminine, sexy, smooth body seeking gay or bi man for fun, must be non-smoker. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418713

FEMININE, sexy, cross-dresser, non-smoker, seeking cross-dresser gay or bi guy for fun. Must be non-smoker. Text only to Mailbox No: 4866072

JESSICA, 53 yrs old, feminine, sexy, smooth body seeking gay or bi man for fun, must be non-smoker. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418713

PETE 49, slim, 5ft 7in s, smoker, creative, likes art, live bands, outdoors, seeks similar female for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416421

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CROSSOVER KING:

Nissan's Qashqai, Juke and X-Trail (below) offer something for most buyers



Nissan - the crossover brand

BRAND UPDATE: Having invented the sector, Nissan has consolidated its dominance by creating a crossover model to fit most buyers' aspirations...

NISSAN launched the original Qashqai in 2007, quickly crushing lingering accusations that it was a "boring" brand.

For it had created a new and versatile crossover niche: part sports utility vehicle (SUV), part MPV (multi-purpose vehicle) and part family hatch.

The Qashqai also looked and drove well in front or all-wheel drive format, was designed and produced in the UK, maintained high second-hand values, and had some good powertrains, notably sister brand Renault's excellent 1.5-litre turbodiesel, giving front-driven Qashqais the power with economy to please recession-hit families.

The Qashqai Mk1 also did something few cars manage: it sold better as it aged, with British sales soaring from 20,000 in year one to 50,000 for its final one and becoming a UK Top 10 seller – not for nothing does the trade know it as the 'Cashcow'.

While others rushed to emulate the Qashqai, Nissan was already working on more crossovers: in 2010 it launched the smaller Juke (from £13,930).

The car looked like a bulldog and a raked roof ate into rear headroom, but a flood of buyers loved it for all that, plus its high driving position,



choice of front-wheel drive and 4x4 and, again, its 'Made in the UK' pedigree.

With one eye on the success of those retro rivals, the MINI and Fiat 500, Nissan also gave free rein to customisation.

However, still not content to rest on crossover laurels or give rivals a breather, Nissan followed up in 2014 by re-making the X-Trail.

Once the most rugged of SUVs, the third generation X-Trail (from £21,995) looks like the big brother to the latest Qashqai (from £18,545); old rough edges have been smoothed for the loss of genuine off-road ability and a gain in on-road handling and comfort, plus a seven-seat option - no longer offered on the Qashqai.



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REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLE KADJAR Dynamique Nav TCe 130

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Kia Carens shows its MPV class

Korean brand's design revolution shows more clearly with a workhorse model like the rakish – yet well-priced – Carens seven-seat MPV, writes **Steve Loader...**

KIA styling has propelled recent sales as surely as the Korean brand's value for money pitch and industry-leading seven-year/100,000-mile warranty.

But while flagship designs like the imposing Sportage SUV and suave Ceed hatchback grab headlines, supposedly humdrum types like the Carens MPV (multi-purpose vehicle) deserve praise too; this seven-seat family workhorse could not be more different from its 'Mr Blobby' predecessor.

The credit here goes to Kia's German design guru Peter Schreyer, who has transformed Kia's image since his hiring in 2006.

Famous for his hand in ground-breakers like the first Audi TT and 1997-2011 VW New Beetle, Schreyer said Kias used to look too 'neutral' on the road.

No such accusation can be made against the rakish Carens, an MPV that Kia says people want to own, rather than simply buy for seven seats as standard and aggressive pricing from £18,195.

Not that versatility has been sacrificed for looks: a 50mm longer wheelbase, and lower seat positions than before means more than matching its rivals for capacity, with



good head, leg and shoulder room across all three seat rows, plus more luggage space and a lower loading lip.

Three individual sliding and reclining centre-row seats replaced a split bench, and all five rear seats and front passenger seat fold flat in 'van mode'.

There is also an under-floor boot compartment where the cargo

screen can be quickly stowed when not needed – a boon for those who only occasionally use seats six and seven.

The glassy cabin has the high quality fixtures and finish we now expect from Kia. Okay, access and comfort for the two rearmost seats is a little tight, but something shared with virtually all MPVs of this scale.

Refinement is excellent, particu-



larly on the motorway and selectable levels for the power steering are useful for different situations, such as tight parking spaces.

However, the Carens' height and need for comfort fully laden, causes slight leaning on bends – though it's far from the worst in this class of MPV.

Three engines are offered: a 133bhp 1.6-litre petrol unit capable

Kia Carens 3 1.7 CRDi SatNav ISG

Price:	from £24,845
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★
Value:	★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Best rival:	Ford C-Max

of 44.1mpg on the official combined cycle, and 1.7-litre diesels delivering 114 and 134bhp with 60.1mpg and 56.4mpg combined respectively.

We tested the flagship diesel, a refined all-rounder, although the lower output version is the best seller.

All manual gearbox versions have Kia's Intelligent Stop & Go (ISG) engine stop-start system, to cut emissions and fuel consumption.

Standard specification is typically generous, comes on top of that Kia warranty, and includes 17-inch alloys, headlights with cornering lamps, LED daytime running lamps, electrically adjustable heated door mirrors, driver's seat height adjustment and fully adjustable wheel, leather-trimmed wheel and gear-shift, air con, steering wheel-mounted controls, electric windows, and cruise control.

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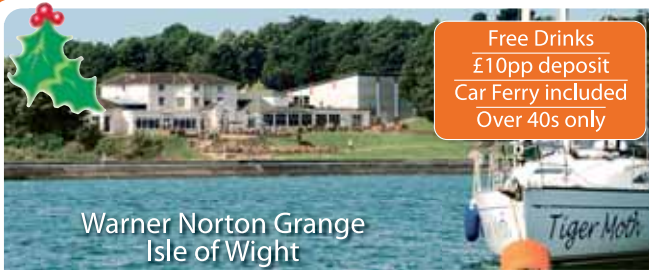
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27 November, 2015 • 3 nights half board-plus, from **£239pp** • Quote: XN11-KOS

Great Entertainment, Free Drinks, and a super location make Warner's Norton Grange resort, at Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight, our most popular Christmas Party venue. This Christmas we're featuring music from the 60s and 70s including Edison Lighthouse (*Love Grows where my Rosemary goes*) plus tributes to Dusty Springfield and Tom Jones and lots of festive and nostalgic fun. There's also a Free Bar from 6pm to midnight every night.

INCLUDED: Free drinks from 6pm to midnight every night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & pumped mixers • 3 dinners and 3 breakfasts • Live nightly entertainment • 3 nights en-suite chalet - upgrades available • Return car ferry



Original 70s band Brotherhood of Man
Pontins Pakefield

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Over 40s only

Christmas Cracker Party through the Decades

20 November, 2015 • 3 nights half board-plus, **£129pp** • Quote: CC11-KOS

Join us for an over 40s Christmas party weekend to remember as we re-wind the decades and go back to the 60s, 70s and 80s at Pontins Pakefield, by the sea near Lowestoft, Suffolk. Enjoy live music from original 70s band Brotherhood of Man, 60s rockers The Swinging Blue Jeans and the new touring show Whitney - Queen of The Night. Add 3 Free Drinks per person per night and you've got the perfect recipe for a great party weekend.

INCLUDED: 3 Free drinks every night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights en-suite chalet - upgrade available • Towels & linen



Turkey & Tinsel at Bosworth Hall Hotel, Leics

Mondays: 2 & 9 Nov, 14 Dec, 2015 • 4 nights half board + 99p Drinks, **£125pp** • Quote: TT11/12-KOS

Enjoy an early taste of Christmas with a super Turkey & Tinsel break at Bosworth Hall Hotel, Leicestershire, in the Heart of England. Our 4-night festive breaks include half-board accommodation, 99p drinks and entertainment every night - all for an unbeatable price.

INCLUDED: 99p drinks every night 6pm-9pm - house beers and spirits, house wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers • Nightly entertainment • 4 nights sharing a twin/double room • 4 breakfasts • 1 three-course dinner • 1 traditional Christmas dinner with all the trimmings • 1 hot & cold buffet dinner • 1 Gala Hogmanay buffet dinner



Worthing Winter Warmer Party - Chatsworth Hotel

29 Jan & 5 Feb, 2016 • 2 nights half board-plus, **£129pp** • Quote: WG1/2-KOS

Join us in Worthing for a Winter Warmer Party and enjoy £1 drinks and live entertainment every night. The Chatsworth is one of the finest hotels on the south coast, just a stone's throw from the sea and a short stroll to the town centre. All bedrooms are en-suite and a lift services all floors.

INCLUDED: £1 drinks from 7pm to 10pm both evenings - pint of house beer or small glass of wine • 2 dinners and 2 breakfasts • Live nightly entertainment • 2 nights sharing an en-suite bedroom with TV & free wifi



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Dance tuition
with Philip Wylie

Free Drinks • £10pp deposit
Entertainment • Over 40s only
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Isle of Wight Come Dancing Party

8 January, 2016 • 3 nights half board-plus, from **£279pp** • Quote: BP1-3-KOS

Dance enthusiasts can enjoy dance tuition, dance cabaret, social dancing, a Gala Ball and much more at our Carry on New Year party weekend at Warner Bembridge Coast Hotel on the Isle of Wight. Six Times UK Ten Dance Champions Richard Still and Morgan Hemphill will dance 2 evening sessions for us and also provide a Latin workshop. Dance tuition - up to 8 hours - is by Philip Wylie of Ballroom & Latin Dance specialists **Holiday & Dance**. There are reserved tables and seating exclusively for a maximum of 200 dance guests who also have access to the show lounge with our super 60s entertainment line-up.

INCLUDED: Free drinks from 6pm to midnight every night • 3 dinners and 3 breakfasts • Live nightly entertainment • Social dancing • Dance demonstrations and tuition • Gala New Year's Eve Ball • 3 nights en-suite chalet - upgrades to main hotel available • Return car ferry crossing Portsmouth-Fishbourne or Lymington-Yarmouth



The Merseybeats

The Ivy League

Free Drinks • Entertainment
Over 40s only • £10pp deposit

We Love the 60s Spring Party Weekend

11 March, 2016 • 3 nights half board-plus, **£129pp** • Quote: PS3-KOS

Join us at Pontins Pakefield, on the Suffolk coast, for a Spring Party - for over 40s only - to blow away the winter cobwebs. We've lined up a brilliant entertainment showbill featuring The Ivy League, The Merseybeats and The Pacemakers plus tributes to The Beach Boys and The Beatles. With non-stop entertainment from Friday evening to Sunday evening and free drinks every night, this is one party weekend you're sure to love.

INCLUDED: 3 Free drinks per person per night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers • Full 60s theme entertainment programme • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • 3 nights en-suite chalet accommodation - upgrade available



Entertainment
Over 40s only
£10pp deposit

Fab Feb 60s Party at Stoke Rochford Hall, Lincs

26 February, 2016 • 2 nights half board-plus, **£119pp** • Quote: SR2-KOS

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INCLUDED: 2 nights sharing an en-suite bedroom with TV & tea/coffee tray • 2 dinners & 2 breakfasts • Live entertainment both nights • Free use of leisure facilities (indoor pool & gym)



Entertainment
£10pp deposit

Hotel Piccadilly, Bournemouth

Fridays: 19 Feb, 4 March, 2016 • 3 nights half board, **£119pp** • Quote: B02/3-KOS

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£5,246 - £5,564 – 15 hours per week, Weekends only – Term time only, plus 2 weeks *

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Or you may call **01843 608727** (24 hour recruitment answer machine).

Please note that CV's will not be considered.

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Superbikes blaze into Brands Hatch

Local hero Shane 'Shakey' Byrne is gunning for a fifth title



FAST: Shakey will be hoping to stay ahead of the pack in front of his home circuit fans

Motorsports

By Jamie Weir

jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

THOUSANDS of race fans will descend on the sleepy suburbs of Longfield, near Sevenoaks this weekend, as the final round of this year's MCE British Superbikes Championship (BSB) take place.

Local boy Shane 'Shakey' Burn will be hoping to make yet more history, after becoming the only man to claim four of the coveted titles at last year's showdown.

This year, the Sittingbourne-based rider is on a 'strive for five' which will cement his legend in the high-octane sport forever.

It hasn't be an easy season for the racer though, with a pre-season smash in Spain which cost him pre-

cious tune up time ahead of the start of the championship races.

He's also faced some stiff competition throughout the year in the form of Australian Josh Brookes, who currently sits at the top of the championship leaderboard. Brookes is on the hunt for his first ever BSB title and isn't going down without a fight

But Brands Hatch being Shakey's home track, he's always happiest jousting his fellow race series competitors there.

And the track is happy to be hosting Shakey alongside BSB's other stars, telling KoS that it's one of the high points in their calendar.

Stuart Higgs is the series and race director for the championship. Based at Brands Hatch he says that the circuit is the ideal location for the final race.

He told KoS: "The championship is famed for unusual outcomes. The weather is looking okay, most sunny

with a decent temperature for October so it should be good for fans. Brands Hatch is a natural amphitheatre, where you feel you're at a place where drama is aplenty and it's the perfect stage; the noise will be phenomenal on Sunday, for sure."

Having watched the riders through the season, he says that the rivalry is significant between the two top riders.

Higgs said: "The competitiveness between Shane and Josh is steely, you can cut the atmosphere between them with a knife and it's really very clear to see that there's no love lost between the pair.

"One man will walk away from the race with the trophy on Sunday night, and Kent fans will obviously be cheering for their man."

Shakey himself seems confident going into the weekend, saying that he's looking forward to a 'great weekend' of riding.

Husband and wife win golf Battle of Britain

A MARRIED couple have each been victorious at a golf tournament.

Husband and wife, Nigel and Hilary Shields triumphed in the latest Battle of Britain competition at the Wildernes Club in Sevenoaks.

Nigel competed against 68 golfers to win the men's event on September 27 and Hilary maintained the family's winning streak at the ladies' event, held on October 6.

The club members will share the trophy for the next six months.

First played in 2008, the 18-hole competition commemorates the life of Flight Lieutenant Lionel Harold Schwind whose Hurricane aircraft was shot down in 1940, during the Battle of Britain and crashed onto the golf course at the club.

The wreckage was only discovered in the 1970s and for many years the



TEAM: Nigel and Hilary Shields

remainder of the plane was displayed in the Shoreham Air Museum.

The club has since used one of the

plane's pistons to create the competition's trophy.

In 1980, the club marked the spot where the plane crashed with a memorial plaque, which is still on display.

This competition also has great significance to the Shields, as Nigel's father was a fighter pilot who flew both Hurricanes and Spitfires from 1941, just after the Battle of Britain.

Simon Neathercoat, chairman of Wildernes Club, said: "As a club, we are proud of our heritage and this is a fantastic way to remember Flight Lt Schwind and the other pilots who fought and lost their lives during the Battle of Britain.

"Our members really enjoyed the competitions and a big congratulations to Nigel and Hilary for winning their individual categories."

Sport Shorts

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Gills strive to keep winning mentality

AFTER a strong start to the season, Gillingham could be forgiven for resting on their laurels.

The team – who have bonded under the leadership of gaffer Justin Edinburgh – have managed to stay within spitting distance of the top of the table after taking more home victories at this quarter point of the season than any other in the league.

But despite the success so far, Edinburgh doesn't want his boys to lose focus out on the field, saying that even bottom of the table teams like Crewe could end the Gills' run of wins.

Edinburgh said: "This league is wide open and week in, week out there are always results where people think 'where did that come from' or 'how did that happen'."

The gaffer says that instead, it's about staying sharp whoever the opposition.

He said: "The inevitable will happen if you think you are already going to be collecting the points. As players and staff, we certainly won't have that mentality."



SOLID: Edinburgh doesn't want his team taking chances



QUAIFE: The driver celebrates with his teammates

Quaife drives team to Endurance Series title

TUNBRIDGE Wells' Phil Quaife finished second at the Hankook 12 Hours of Brno to seal the 24H International Endurance Series Overall Teams' title last weekend.

Quaife – racing alongside Moutran brothers Nabil, Ramzi and Sami – headed for the Czech Republic eager to secure outright spoils as the highest scoring entry among 90-plus cars competing in the FIA-affiliated series.

The chances of doing so looked unlikely at mid-distance, before Quaife's decisive surge over the

second half of the race helped bring the family-run SEAT Leon Cup Racer back into contention. And with the drop-score system excluding each crew's worst result of the six-round campaign, second place would prove enough for Duel Racing to claim the Overall Teams' title by just three points.

He said afterwards: "Obviously the end result was fantastic but we really, really had to work for it. No-one gave us it on a plate, and winning the championship tastes all the sweeter for it."

FA Cup qualifying draw made

THE draw for the fourth and final qualifying round of the FA Cup has been made.

Margate follow up their emphatic win over Truro City with another home tie against Forest Green Rovers while Maidstone United will travel to Chippenham Town.

Elsewhere, Dover Athletic have been drawn away to Eastbourne

Borough, Welling United will travel to Grays Athletic and Bromley will host Eastleigh.

All fixtures will be played on Saturday, October 24.

Winners of the ties will progress to the first round proper, where they will be joined by Gillingham and other teams from League One and League Two.

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